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ABSTRACT

This document is one in a series of resource manuals providing child welfare content that can be included in existing core courses in social work education programs, i.e., social work policy, social work practice, social work research, and human development in the social environment. Part 1 of the document discusses the reasons for developing child welfare core courses, the process for the development and use of the child welfare content, and the five specific issues selected for development. Part 2 presents eight sections of material that can be used in teaching the meaning and importance of the first of these issues, "Attachment and Separation," for child welfare services. Sections I through VI include a discussion of the issue, learning objectives, case studies, learning exercises, and a list of audiovisual resources and resource persons. Material provided in these sections can be used in any of the four core courses. Section VII lists readings for each of the core courses, and section VIII provides guidelines for incorporating the material on separation and attachment into each of the four core courses. (BH)

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REGION III
CHILD WELFARE EDUCATION AND TRAINING RESOURCES

SUGGESTED CHILD WELFARE CONTENT
FOR REQUIRED COURSES IN
PROGRAMS OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Attachment and Separation

CG 018002

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REGION III
CHILD WELFARE TRAINING CENTER

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

SUGGESTED CHILD WELFARE CONTENT FOR REQUIRED CORE COURSES IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION PROGRAMS

ATTACHMENT AND SEPARATION

September 1981

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Region III Child Welfare Training Center
School of Social Work
Virginia Commonwealth University
1001 West Franklin Street
Richmond, Virginia 23284
(804) 257-6231 or 257-6628

Center Staff:

Henry L. Gunn, III, MSW - Director
Jan McCarthy - Project Associate
Michael L. Sugg, Ph.D. - Project Associate

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We wish to thank members of the Center's Steering Committee and also, the Region III faculty who responded to a survey from the Center for their suggestions of significant child welfare topics for inclusion in core courses.

A draft of this document on separation and attachment was reviewed by social work faculty at a workshop conducted by the Center in May 1981. We appreciate the valuable comments and recommendations made by the faculty who attended this workshop.

The case examples in Section III of children who have experienced separation were developed by Dr. Vera Fahlberg. We are grateful to her for allowing us to use them in this document.

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PART ONE

Instructions For Use Of This Document

To gain a clear understanding of the purpose and potential utility of the material included in this document, it is essential that the reader carefully review both Part One and Part Two.

Part One

Part One provides introductory information about the development of child welfare curriculum in social work education programs that is critical for establishing the context in which the eight sections in Part Two can be used.

In Part One the Center establishes the reasons for developing child welfare content for core courses, discusses the process for the development and use of child welfare content, and outlines the issues regarding the development of material for core courses.

Part Two

Part Two provides the reader with eight sections of material that can be used in teaching the issue "Attachment and Separation" as it relates to child welfare services.

Sections I - VI of Part Two provide material that can be used in any of the four core courses (HBSE, policy, practice, and research). For example, in Section III, Case Studies, it is left to the reader to choose which case study would be used in a HBSE course, which case study would be used in a policy course, etc.

In Section VII, the readings have been listed according to the courses in which they can be used. In Section VIII the implications of "Separation and Attachment" are discussed within the context of each of the four courses. When the reader uses Section VIII, he must return to Sections I - VII to find supportive material to use in each individual course.

Introduction

Definition of Child Welfare

In developing content about "Child Welfare" services for social work education programs, the Center is using the definition of child welfare listed below:

> "Child Welfare is a Field of Social Work Practice that includes a System of Agencies, Public and Private, that offer Preventive, Protective, and Rehabilitative Services to Families Where Children are Potentially or Actually in Jeopardy and that offer Temporary or Permanent Substitute Care For Children whose Families Are Unable To Provide Such Care".

According to a national study completed in 1977*, public child welfare services were provided to 1.8 million children in the United States. Twenty five percent of these 1.8 million children were in foster care. Multiple foster care placements were frequent for these children.

These figures indicate that large numbers of families and children disrupt and are separated by foster care placement. The Region III Child Welfare Training Center is committed to strengthening social services to these families and children in order to:

(1) prevent family separation/disruption
(2) reunify families that have been separated
(3) provide timely permanent placements for children who have been separated from their families and who are unable to return home

One means of strengthening these services to families and children is to insure that service providers are trained, competent, and skilled workers who are sensitive to the needs and strengths of families in stress. To sensitize students in social work education programs to these issues, it is necessary to include curriculum on services to families and children at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. The Center is working with social work education programs to develop curriculum about services for families and children and to assist in putting this curriculum material to use in the social work education programs.

Rationale for the Development of Child Welfare Content for Core Courses

During its first two years of operation the Region III Child Welfare Training Center developed the following two family and child welfare related courses, distributed the courses to social work education programs, and conducted workshops about the implementation of these two courses:

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*Shyne, A.W. and Schroeder, A.G., National Study of Social Services to Children and Their Families. (D.H.E.W. Publication No. (OHDS) 78-3015). Rockville, MD, 1978.

(1) Practice Related Course In Family and Child Welfare for BSW Programs

(2) Home-Based/Family Centered Services (for MSW programs)

A third course, "Legal Issues in Child Welfare", has been developed in draft form and distributed to those schools represented at a May 1981 workshop sponsored by the Center. The draft of this course and comments of the May workshop participants will be sent to the Region V Child Welfare Training Center. The Region V Center is coordinating the efforts of the ten training centers to develop a "legal Issues in Child Welfare" course that will be distributed to social work education programs throughout the country.

In most social work education programs, courses such as the above three are electives and are taken primarily by students who are specializing in family and children's services. It is important for students and workers involved in family and child welfare education and practice to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide quality services. This requires extensive specialized education and training social work education programs on the job. The three courses already developed by the Center will assist in providing the specialized education required by family and children's services workers; however, social workers who provide peripheral support services to families and children must also have the basic knowledge, skills, and sensitivity to assist families in stress.

The field of child welfare shares boundaries with all fields of social work practice, not just family and children's services. A family in stress may need services from the health and mental health system, the educational system, the justice system, the welfare system, etc. It is imperative that social workers in all fields understand family systems, the level at which both public and private agencies can and do intervene in family life, and how social service workers are involved in that intervention. If the family in stress is to be maintained intact, social workers in other support agencies must also have the knowledge and skills to provide critical services to help these families in stress who come to them. They must also be knowledgeable of the entire child welfare system so that they know what specific services are available to families and children in need. For example, too many well intentioned social workers have recommended foster care placement without thoroughly understanding the impact of placement on the family and child, and without a clear knowledge of what foster care placement can and cannot offer.

Many social work education programs lack the financial and faculty resources to include specialized family and child welfare courses in the curriculum. Faculty who teach the required core courses usually teach these from their own background for case examples, learning exercises, etc. to use in each course. However, if the faculty member has had limited background in family and child welfare, it is difficult for him/her to include child welfare issues in such core courses as practice, policy, research, and human behavior.

In order to assist in solving the above dilemma which is very real in many social work education programs, the Center is developing child welfare content that can be included in already existing core courses in social work education programs. The content will be developed in such a way that faculty whose practice background has not been in child welfare will be able to use it and adapt it to fit the course(s) they are teaching or plan to teach.

The Center does not believe, however, touching on child welfare issues in core courses will or should be a substitute for child welfare specialization in social work education programs. Specialization is essential for students going into family and children's services agencies. However, including child welfare content in required core courses will assure that all students receive at least some exposure to working with families and children in stress.

Process for the Development and Distribution of Child Welfare Content

In order to initiate the process for developing the child welfare content material, the Center submitted a letter to all social work education programs in Region III in April 1981 to acquaint them with the activity and to solicit their suggestions concerning:

(1) the usefulness in having the Center develop core content in child welfare for social work education programs;
(2) the types of specific issues that should be addressed in the development of child welfare content for core courses;
(3) their interest in serving as a reviewers of the core material that is developed.

Using the responses to our initial memorandum and obtaining input from the Center Steering Committee and from workshop participants, the Center prioritized the issues and selected the following five for development:

(1) Attachment and Separation
(2) Home-Based Family Centered Services
(3) Services to Black Children and Families
(4) Adolescence
(5) Permanent Planning Issues Focusing on Working With Birth Parents and Supervisory Skills

Each of the five issues will be developed in such a way that it can be incorporated into any of these four core courses:

Human Behavior In The Social Environment
Social Work Policy
Social Work Practice
Social Work Research

During the remainder of this year each issue will be developed and reviewed by the volunteer reviewers who have been recruited from the social work education programs in Region III. Final drafts of the materials related to each of the five issues will be distributed at intervals throughout the year.

Projected Outline For Each Issue

The Center's final product for each issue will have the following eight sections and will provide faculty with material in each of these sections:

(1) Outline and thorough discussion of the issue (the lecture)
(2) Learning Objectives
(3) Case Studies
(4) Learning Exercises (instructional techniques)
(5) Suggested Audiovisual Resources
(6) Suggested Resource Persons/Organizations
(7) Bibliography of Readings about the issue with particularly pertinent readings annotated
(8) Guidelines as to how the issue can be incorporated into each of the four core courses.

How The Outline Is To Be Used

It's the Center's intent that the outline described above can be used very flexibly. For example, one faculty member might use the entire outline as a module of a core course while another person may choose to use only the materials from one of the eight sections, e.g. the learning exercises. The Center anticipates that as the materials are used, individual faculty members will also add their own ideas and resources to the Center's package. The materials will be designed so that they can be used for both the BSW and MSW levels. The choice as to the most appropriate level will be left to each individual social work education program.

The materials developed around each issue should not be looked at as complete courses. They are not intended to be so. They will identify issues that can be incorporated into any of the four core courses, but they are not intended to stand alone as courses.

PART TWO

I. Discussion of the Issue

(Attachment and Separation)

I. Discussion of the Issue

Attachment and Separation

Attachment and Separation are issues of utmost importance in normal human growth and development. Understanding the way attachment normally develops between parent and child; understanding what happens to both a parent and child if that attachment is broken (separation); knowing how to strengthen faulty parent-child attachments; and being able to help a child form new bonds if a parent-child attachment is completely severed are all critical tasks for professionals who work with families and children.

Attachment and separation issues must be included in curricula about family and children's services for many reasons. Two of the primary reasons are listed below:

(1) The traumatic effects of separation on families must be demonstrated to students in order to highlight the need for services which prevent family disruption and separation.

(2) When separation must occur, it is extremely important for workers to understand the attachment and separation process in order to minimize the trauma of placement.

The literature has traditionally been sensitive to the meaning of attachment and separation to children, but the impact of separation on the parent has received less attention. Both parents and children who have some attachment to one another are likely to experience grieving when they are separated. It is important for social workers to understand the stages of the grief process: (1) shock, (2) denial/anger/protest, (3) bargaining, (4) depression, (5) acceptance; the behaviors that both parents and children exhibit as a part of the normal grieving process; and methods of helping them move through the various stages of the process. Helping parents and children handle traumatic separations is one of the serious challenges of child welfare work.

Listed below are possible feelings and reactions of children who experience separation. These reactions and feelings are normal, and they are exhibited in many aspects of a child's behavior. A social worker must be sensitive to the meaning of and reason for the behaviors exhibited in order to help a child adjust to the separation.

Possible Feelings

- Anxiety
- Fear
- Sadness
- Loss
- Rejection
- Guilt
- Helplessness
- Happiness
- Excitement
- Cultural Shock
- Ambivalence

Possible Reactions

- Withdrawal
- Lack of trust/investment
- Refusal to form new attachments
- Hostility
- Acting Out
- Bed Wetting
- Poor school work
- Destructiveness
- Lying
- Over competence
- Poor eating/compulsive eating
- Running away

Equally important as the children's feelings and reactions listed above are the feelings experienced by parents whose children are separated from them and the methods of coping with separation and placement that parents use. In 1972 and 1975 Jenkins and Norman identified the following feelings expressed by parents when their children were placed in foster care:

- Sadness (the feeling most often reported)
- Worry
- Nervousness
- Emptiness
- Anger
- Bitterness
- Thankfulness
- Relief
- Guilt
- Shame
- Numbness
- Paralysis[1]

Horejsi identifies two methods that parents may use to deal with the stress of separation and placement. One is viewed as a task oriented or problem solving response; the other is a defense oriented response. Parents who use the latter method attempt to protect themselves from further pain and stress.

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[1] Jenkins, Shirley and Norman, Elaine. Filial Deprivation and Foster Care. New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.

Jenkins, Shirley and Norman, Elaine. Beyond Placement: Mother's View Foster Care. New York: Columbia University, 1975.

They may avoid visiting their children as one means of coping with the pain of separation.[2] A parent may try to handle his guilt, hurt, and anger by denying his attachment to his child - pretending not to care. Workers must be aware of the defense mechanisms at work and understand their causes in order to help a parent move through the stages of the grief process.

The way that attachments between humans develop and function is not completely understood. However, it is known that a strong and healthy bond between a child and his parent allows that child to develop both trust in others and reliance on himself. Children in foster care risk losing all the strengths that come from strong attachments. It is of great importance that students and practitioners learn the impact of foster care placement on children and families, methods of preventing placement and minimizing the trauma of placement if it must occur. Two major themes that occur throughout practical suggestions for working with children in placement are: (1) giving children permission to have feelings and to express these feelings, and (2) explaining exactly what is happening to children when they are moved.[3]

Two concise but thorough descriptions of attachments, separation and placement which can be used as a basis for lecture notes and class discussion are attached to this section of the outline. The source documents for these two articles are listed below:

1. "Separation of Children From Their Families", Chapter I of Permanent Planning Handbook, a publication developed by the Virginia Department of Welfare, Division of Social Services, Richmond, Virginia under a grant (90-C-993) from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

2. "Separation and Placement", CES25, from Comprehensive Emergency Services, Training Guide, 2nd ed,, National Center for Comprehensive Emergency Services To Children, Nashville, Tennessee.

Additional excellent information can be found in Chapters V and VI of Training In The Adoption Of Children With Special Needs, published in 1980 by Project CRAFT, University of Michigan, School of Social Work, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Chapter V - "Attachment and Separation" and Chapter VI - "Helping Children When They Must Move" were written by Dr. Vera Fahlberg.

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[2] Horejsi, Charles R., et al. Parents With Children In Foster Care: A Guide To Social Work Practice, Missoula, Montana: University of Montana, Department of Social Work, 1980, p.11.

[3] Fahlberg, Vera. "Helping Children When They Must Move", Training In The Adoption of Children With Special Needs. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1980, p. VI - 25.

CHAPTER ONE: SEPARATION OF CHILDREN FROM THEIR FAMILIES

Definitions:

- o Attachment - the development of a trusting relationship with a parenting figure.
- o Separation - the situation in which a child and a parent who have some attachment to one another are apart for a period of time.
- o Loss - the feelings associated with separation from an attachment figure when that separation is permanent, or for an extended period of time.
- o Separation Anxiety - the series of reactions to the separation from, and loss of, an attachment figure.
- o Anticipating Grief - the experiencing of some of the stages of grief prior to an actual separation as a way of preparing for loss.

This chapter includes:

1.1 Introduction
1.2 The Development of Attachments
1.3 Separation and Loss
    1.31 Separation During Infancy
    1.32 Separation During Early Childhood
    1.33 Summary
1.4 Recognizing the Symptoms of Separation Anxiety
    1.41 Preparing for Separation
1.5 Working With Families Divided by Placement
    1.51 Planning the Placement
    1.52 Discussing Placement Plans
    1.53 Preparing for the Actual Move Into Placement
    1.54 Moving the Child Into Placement
    1.55 Helping the Child Through the Separation and Loss
    1.56 Maintaining Contact Between the Child and His Family
    1.57 Planning Permanent Separation
    1.58 Working With the Biological and Foster Parents
    1.59 Returning the Child to His/Her Own Home
1.6 Conclusion

1.1 Introduction

It's sad that the first chapter in a handbook on permanent planning for children is on the pain of separation and the damage done to children as a result of family breakdown. It is also essential that we begin here. Studies on child development are in agreement that it is in a child's best interest to be raised in a permanent, stable home. According to Goldstein, Freud and Solnit, once there is a family breakdown and separation of child and parent, we are "Beyond the Best Interests of the Child." Damage has been done, it is serious and permanent, and the best that child welfare workers can do is to choose the least detrimental alternative which shall reestablish permanence and stability in that child's life.

Source: Taken from Chapter I, "Separation of Children From Their Families. Permanent Planning Handbook. Virginia Department of Welfare, Division of Social Services, Richmond, Virginia.

1.2 The Development of Attachments

Attachment must continue unbroken for a long period of time and must involve both physical caretaking as well as physical and verbal interactions. From this secure base, a healthy child will explore the world and, over a period of years, will develop into a separate individual who can care for herself/herself, think clearly, and form close relationships. Problems that occur when separation occurs due to external causes can be permanent and serious.

1.3 Separation and Loss

The process of a child's development in terms of attachment to a parent is a long and involved one, and it is crucial that this occurs at the child's pace. There are many things that can go wrong, and the damage to a child as a result of a specific trauma is hard to predict. However, certain general guidelines can be used to understand the potential problems arising from separations occuring at particular stages in a child's life.

1.31 Separation During Infancy

The first time when a problem might occur would be in the initial period when attachment is formed. Some parents do not respond to a child's cries of discomfort, at least not in a predictable way. They may physically care for a child but not interact by cuddling and talking, or may give child care responsibilities to a number of other caregivers. Under these circumstances, a child will be slower in identifying someone who is special to him/her. If a child is not cared for consistently, s/he has trouble learning the sequence of pain, action and relief from pain. This early thinking pattern, which in healthy situations gives the infant some sense of controlling his/her life, is crucial to later ability to learn (Jacqui Schiff et al, Cathekis Reader, Transactional Analysis Treatment of Psychosis, Harper and Row, Publishers Inc., New York, 1975).

The need for cuddling and verbal interactions with infants has been well documented (John Bowlby, Attachment and Loss Volume II, Separation, Basic Books, Inc. New York, 1973). Physically adequate care with other physical and verbal interaction missing leads to withdrawal of the child or failure to interact with his/her environment. Some infants have been known to die, even with an adequate diet, as a result of this withdrawal. Finally, if a lot of different people care for an infant, that child will be noticeably slower in forming an attachment to one person. However, once an attachment is made, it is much more intense and clinging than in healthier children. These children tend to be less willing to go out to explore the world as a result of their early anxiety about separation.

Early problems in the development of a parent-child attachment can be evident throughout the child's development. Most of the schizophrenia disorders and many other mental illnesses are believed to have their roots in these early traumas. If parenting from this point on is caring and consistent, the early problems may be largely overcome. However, if inconsistent, rejecting or abusive parenting continues, severe emotional disorders are likely to develop.

Regardless of the early situation, all but a very few children form an attachment to one or more caretaking adults. (Those who do not form attachments are generally diagnosed as autistic and do not relate to people except as objects.) Once the attachment is formed, any prolonged and/or sudden separation can be severely traumatic to the child's ability to relate to others, and to his/her own self image.

Studies of children who have been separated from their parents have shown that there are certain typical responses to separation. For example, in a child's first year s/he perceives his/her parents as not separate from but as people whom s/he can make appear by crying, crawling to them or opening her eyes. Furthermore, in his/her frame of reference, those people are essential for survival. If the parents are suddenly taken from him/her - as in an accident - s/he could only understand this in the context of his/her limited knowledge of the world. Specifically, young children, even up through early school age years, believe that they are responsible for parents' leaving. To a very young child, the loss of parents, can be terrifying. In an infant who has developed an attachment, the world, and hence survival, depends upon his/her feeling a need, crying or crawling and thus making the caretaker appear, and then being cared for. When this pattern suddenly stops working and someone else appears and provides care in a different way, the infant's whole concept of the universe is shaken and s/he must reshape that concept.

1.32 Separation During Early Childhood

As a child becomes older, s/he begins exploring the world. However, s/he does this only by maintaining regular contact with his/her parents. Suppose s/he goes exploring one day and his/her parents go away. A young child does not understand going and coming. People exist or don't exist (Selma H. Fraiberg, The Magic Years, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1959). When a parent "disappears" then to a child that may mean many things. One common meaning to the child is that it is not safe to explore the world (learn things) or parents will disappear. Related to this is a fear that "if I go out in the world I will disappear." A child who experiences a sudden or prolonged separation may be very fearful of exploring and thus learning about the world.

The healthy child also does things to please and be like the loved parent. His/her identity is with the parent or parents. When there is a separation, s/he is threatened in two crucial areas. First, the child who has begun to trust that the parent will provide nurturing and stability is suddenly in a position where this "basic trust" in the world is seriously challenged (Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society, Second Edition, W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., New York, 1963). A child experiencing a prolonged separation in these early years may well conclude that the world, and the people in it, are not to be trusted. Secondly, the child's self concept is based on how s/he is treated, and in identifying with those who care for him/her. Separations are often interpreted by the child as meaning that s/he is not worthy of being cared for or that there is something wrong with him/her that drove the parent away. As a result of this strain on the trusting relationship and the emerging self concept, children who have been separated often show setbacks in accomplishments. For example, a child recently toilet trained will usually lose sphincter control when the parent is no longer around to please. Most difficult to assess, however, are setbacks to the child's emotional development.

Children who have been separated from parents show their distress through crying, anger and withdrawal. Future attachments, even with the same parent, are frequently more shallow and less trusting with considerable displays of anger. It appears that these children decide that it is not safe to get close to anyone and future relationships will take longer to develop or will develop at a superficial level only. With each subsequent separation the chance of the child deciding that it is not safe to trust others is increased dramatically.

1.33 Summary

Throughout this section we have talked about separations which are sudden and prolonged. It is crucial for us as caseworkers to look at separation in relation to the child's time frame rather than that of adults. Adults prepare for a separation by planning ahead for someone's absence. Such plans include things like structuring our time with things to do to fill in whatever time will be vacant because of that person being away. Very young children do not anticipate someone leaving. In the child's context, any leaving by a parent is sudden, for they experience the loss only after the parent is gone. In terms of the prolonged absence, that too is different from our time frame. Goldstein, Freud and Solnit (Beyond the Best Interest of the Child, The Free Press, New York, 1973) indicate that emotionally and intellectually the infant and young toddler cannot comprehend waiting for parents more than a few days without feeling overwhelmed by the loss. Children under five years of age cannot understand a wait of more than two months, young school children six months, and older school age children one year. The child's sense of desertion is painful and filled with tremendous grief and anger. Even when a consistent parent figure is restored, the scars may always interfere in future relationships.

1.4 Recognizing the Symptoms of Separation Anxiety

The experience of loss or separation is a painful one for children and adults alike. Although there are certain general steps or stages of reaction to separation and loss, each individual responds in his/her own unique way, and at his/her own pace. Consider your own reactions to the loss of a loved one, either through death, divorce or other separations. While your reactions may be similar to those of others near you, your feelings and behavior are also different from people you know. It is important to keep this individualism in mind as we discuss symptoms to watch for in separation anxiety.

Separation anxiety is, in many ways, similar to grief experienced as a result of the death of a loved one. For children especially this is true since children have difficulty comprehending the difference between death and a long separation. Given the child's time frame, the grief experienced by a separation of even a few months is the same as if the missing person had died. There are five major stages in the grieving process as identified by Kubler-Ross: 1) denial and isolation; 2) anger; 3) bargaining; 4) depression; 5) acceptance (Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, On Death and Dying, MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1969).

Grieving is a painful and lonely process. You and the foster parents can do little to eliminate the pain and loneliness. Unfortunately, we have been guilty of preventing resolution of the grief through our attempts to take away or cover up that pain. The following is a description of each stage of grief and possible behaviors which may be observed in both parents and children:

1) Denial and Isolation

Immediately following the separation, there is usually a period of shock during which time the person may go through the motions of a daily schedule, but will do so woodenly or as if in a daze. This period of shock is related to the first stage of the grieving process which is denial and isolation. Child and adult alike may appear to act inappropriately to the separation. For example, the child may appear happy and content and talk as though the parent is still around despite clear statements about the separation. Likewise, the parent or foster parent who has lost a child may frequently deny the loss by setting an extra place at the table or by failing to cry and show sadness at the loss.

Denial is an important defense mechanism, protecting people from pain at the time when they are least able to handle it. Workers and foster parents frequently support denial as the only way to deal with grief by encouraging its use. Thus, it may seem easier not to confront a child or parent with the hard facts of the loss, rather than to bring on the grief that

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follows. However, if the person does not move through to a stage of acceptance, each subsequent loss will be more difficult for that person to handle.

2) Anger

The second stage of grief is anger. In children the anger may be directed towards any number of sources. They frequently lash out with physical and/or verbal assaults against other children, caretaking adults or themselves. As discussed earlier, the child assumes that s/he is responsible for the loss of the parent, so may turn his/her anger inward. However, s/he also feels anger towards the missing parent and may take that out on the new parent figure or other people around him/her. The violence of this anger can be very frightening to a child who may equate his/her anger with the cause of the parent's disappearance. Since the anger is seldom focused on the grief process, it can be hard to identify.

One child, in her anger, very carefully broke fifteen window panes in a shed; others hit and bite other children, and many find fault with the foster parents or provoke them in some way so as to receive discipline. Stealing, lying and bedwetting may all be acts related to the angry phase of grief.

In biological parents and foster parents there is also an angry stage when each may criticize and complain about you, the agency or even the child. When you recognize the source of the anger and help focus it as part of the grieving process, then people can usually move on to other stages. Nevertheless, there is seldom an orderly progression from stage one through stage five, and children and parents alike may move back into anger after having appeared to have given it up.

3) Bargaining

In stage three, bargaining, the child, believing himself/herself to be the cause of the loss may begin to bargain for return of the lost parent. This is seldom done verbally, but children can usually be observed to try very hard to adapt to the rules and regulations of a new home and to "be good" in an attempt to win approval. The bargain is usually inside the child's mind and does not come true. Thus bargaining is usually seen as a period of time during which the child alternately behaves well and is a joy to the foster family, followed by periods of temper tantrums or sneaky and angry behavior. These swings in behavior can be very trying for foster families, and children are often moved while in this stage, thus creating a second layer of grieving while the first situation has not yet been resolved.

Parents at the bargaining stage may demonstrate similar behavior. Previously neglecting parents may make agreements with you to do all sorts of "good" things to get their child home. Unfortunately, these promises are usually grandiose and unrealistic and thus doomed to failure and more anger. It is crucial for you to be aware of this stage when parents will do "anything" to get their child home, and to keep contracts or bargains to realistic, achievable goals.

4. Depression

The stages of anger and bargaining gradually give way to the stage of depression. In this stage the child or adult will appear listless and apathetic with behavior geared towards withdrawal from the world. Child and adult alike will exhibit difficulty in initiating any activity and will appear to have very little energy.

Children during this stage of depression will often seem sad and resigned. They make few demands or responses to their environment. Efforts to keep them busy or get them interested in an activity are generally of little use and they will make only token efforts to get involved. The nature of the depression at this stage is closer to despair than to sadness and there is considerable pain and hopelessness to the victim.

It is during this stage that children will show considerable regression in previous accomplishments. Achievements in toilet training, table manners and school work will frequently be lost and the child will seem to have no desire to improve.

Adults suffering from a loss also go through this stage of despair or depression. For the parents who have lost their child to foster care, this period may be characterized by regression in progress toward return of the child. Where previously they agreed to do "anything" to get the child back, now the feeling is clear that "nothing" they do would be enough. They have little energy, do not function much during the day and may show signs of regression in previously achieved tasks such as housekeeping and personal grooming.

5) Acceptance

The move to the final stage of acceptance may take months or years. Whatever the time period, this stage of acceptance is marked by an increase in energy and the reestablishment of contact with people and the outside world. In adults and children who are verbal, acceptance can be noted by an ability to talk about both the good and bad memories of the lost person. Although there may still be a sadness about the person who has been lost, the significant difference in this stage is the ability to plan for the future. Children will begin to make attachments to those people around them, to pick up in achievements previously lagging such as toilet training or school work, and to have fun again. Adults will demonstrate this same shift in energy from self-centered grief to an ability to relate to others and plan for the future in spite of the loss.

When a person has reached this level of acceptance we generally say that the grief has been successfully resolved. However, there may be periods of regression, especially during time of stress. An anniversary of the loss, another separation, or fear of another loss can precipitate more grieving. Also, during each developmental stage, children may need to deal with their previous loss again.

People do not make clean transitions from one stage of grief to the next, and an understanding of the five stages can merely make one sensitive to what to look for, and how to recognize the symptoms. The process described is for long term separation or permanent separation which is sudden. For older children and adults however, there can be some differences.

1.41 First, adults and children who are verbal can be prepared for a separation by talking about the plans ahead of time. In these situations the grieving process will start prior to the actual separation in what is known as anticipatory grief. The stages remain similar, but occur while the loved person is still around to help in comforting about the impending loss. Differences also occur during shorter separations for adults and older children who can anticipate the future and delay gratification. For example, a 10 year old who knows he will see his mother in two days, may miss her, but not in the same desperate way as if she were gone forever.

Through all the stages of grief or separation anxiety there are certain typical behaviors that we can observe. With some separations there are disturbances in eating and sleeping patterns. There is also particular vulnerability to infections and many children in foster care develop upper respiratory ailments shortly after placement. The fact of a separation results in a special sensitivity to and anxiety about the potential loss of safety and protection available in the world. This anxiety is evidenced in various forms of distancing from other people either through obvious behaviors which drive people away (kicking, name calling, or biting) or through more subtle techniques (superficial smiling, overadaptation to expectations or keeping busy).

1.5 Working With Families Divided by Placemen[illegible]

Working with families who are divided because their children are placed requires good understanding of the separation process, of child development, and of family dynamics as well as a wide range of casework skills. The difficulty in working with such families is great, especially when you are responsible for making the plans for placement. Despite the difficulties, a placement handled skillfully, with clear goals and objectives, can be effective in promoting positive significant family changes. It is well known that individuals and families in crisis are most amenable to change. Positive use of this fact in placement can help offset the inherent risks and potential damage to children and families.

1.51 Planning the Placement

The first, and most obvious, rule for placement workers is to plan any move carefully. An understanding of the grief and separation process should make this obvious. Except in the most obviously life threatening situations, preparation for placement by you and the parents is possible. Plans for placement should include the following items: 1) You need to be clear about the specific reasons for placement, 2) why removal of the child is the "least detrimental" alternative, and 3) what specific family changes will be necessary for this child to safely return home. Those reasons should be discussed with your supervisor or another member of the placement team to assure that placement is necessary, goal directed and time limited.

Replacement planning tends to be the exception, rather than the rule in many courts and agencies. A common scene is for parents to be seen in juvenile court due to neglect of their children with the result being the ordering of the immediate removal of the children from their home. An agency worker will then rush the children off to a foster home with no explanations, pick up a few of the children's clothes from home the next day, and warn the parents against visiting for at least a month. Neither the courts nor the agencies in these situations appear to have any idea of the trauma they are causing. The trauma of child and family, and to their relationship with the court and agency is great in these sudden, unplanned separations. In many cases the trauma of a separation handled in this way is more damaging to children than the danger if they had remained in their inadequate, neglecting, or abusive home.

1.52 Discussing Placement Plans

The decision regarding placement and grounds necessary for return of the child should be discussed in detail with the family and the child or children. You may be reluctant to discuss these factors openly, especially when the decision for placement will ultimately be made by the court, fearing that this will be detrimental to your relationship with the family. Experience has shown that this is not a valid concern. The casework relationship is generally stronger when you are honest with the family. If a situation is bad enough to necessitate placement, then parents are obviously lacking the skills to provide the parenting a child needs. When you are honest about 1) what the problem is, 2) why placement is the only alternative and 3) what must be done for return, you are modeling the parenting role for your clients.

The open discussion of placement plans is crucial for two primary reasons. First, plans for the move can be made jointly, and the trauma of separation can be lessened through mutual efforts to solve the initial problem and return the child. Secondly, pre-planning allows for the grieving process to begin before actual separation. The benefits of this preparatory grief are many. Children can begin to grieve while still in familiar surroundings, can ask questions and prepare emotionally for the upcoming move. Parents also prepare themselves for the separation and can be helped to experience less guilt if given the opportunity to help prepare the child for the move. Preparatory grief will often involve stress for the caseworker in that parents and often children move quickly into the stage of anger and direct this at the worker. For this reason, it is important for workers to be clear that their reasons for removal are valid, to understand the place of anger in the separation process and to get support from supervisors and peers.

1.53 Preparing for the Actual Move Into Placement

Part of the planning process in placement is the choice of where the child will go. It is suggested that this choice can be made after discussion with child and family so that their input can be assessed and taken into consideration. Primary considerations should include the foster family's ability to accept the child and his/her family and the likelihood that there will be no further moves for the child.

The ideal procedure for moving a child involves a long period of preparation including extended visiting so that the child can become familiar with new surroundings, ask questions and express concerns to the biological family, and learn at an experiental level that the move is temporary. Child welfare workers have been too quick to decide that this process is not possible or practical when taking a child from his/her parents, while using it excessively when returning a child home. Biological parents can help to make the move to foster care less traumatic by sharing information about their child with worker and foster parents, by telling their child about the upcoming move and answering the questions and anger that this evokes. You can assist in this by helping biological families explain the placement of their child, explaining about the meaning of the anger, having parents pack special toys and clothes for the child, and so forth.

1.54 Moving the Child Into Placemenm

The second major step in the moving process is the actual move. Here it helps if the child knows where s/he is going, has been assured of the safety of the new place by his/her parents, and can take some familiar things from home. Work with the child and family during this phase involves a continued awareness of the grief process. For children, this means that you and the foster parents should watch for the stages of denial and isolation, anger, bargaining and depression. Specific helping techniques involve talking openly about the biological parents, the natural and normal feelings of anger and responsibility for the move, and the real reasons for placement. Children will often believe that they are bad and caused parents to leave them. The guilt and fear that this causes is usually kept in, and you and the foster parents must watch for openings to bring up the subject.

1.55 Summary Removal

In those cases in which summary removal (removal without warning or time for preparation) occurs, your only recourse is to explain as carefully as possible to everyone what is happening and why. (If you don't know why, say so.) You should also try to determine as quickly as possible where the child will be going, what special toys or clothes the child should take to the foster home, and whether or when the child's parents can visit in the foster home.

You should also realize that the separation anxiety is normally greatly increased when summary removal occurs. Consequently, giving the child and parents a few days or a month to adjust to the new situation could be severely damaging. If there is any benefit at all to be gained from visitation between the parent and child, you should pursue it immediately. Remember, you need to examine the possible benefits through the eyes of the child, then the parent. You then use your own experience and training (and any other help you can get) to determine the best short-term plan for visitation and/or contact.

Regardless of whether or not contact is possible, you should make very effort to see or phone the child within forty-eight hours. This is particularly true for the younger child whose only known link to parents and family is you, the person who made the placement. The faster you begin your permanency planning, the faster the child will return to parents or move to a new permanent home.

Again, a caution that although summary removal may occur, it is no excuse for ignoring the fact of separation anxiety and accepting responsibility for resolving it.

1.56 Helping the Child Through the Separation and Loss

The most common mistake that workers and foster parents make in the placement process is to join in the first stage of denial. When children don't talk about their families they are often described as "adjusting well to placement." The stages of anger and bargaining are frequently seen only in terms of the specific event, and we fail to connect the anger with separation and loss. Children need to be helped to see the connection and to be helped to focus their feelings on the loss. In the stage of depression, or despair, foster families often encourage children to "keep busy" and not to "sit and mope," rather than to allow them to feel the pain which is necessary if they are to reach some degree of acceptance.

1.57 Maintaining Contact Between the Child and His/Her Family

Children who are in placement need to maintain regular contact with their biological parents. The sense of loss and related grief that we have discussed occurs most often in long term separation. For young children a few weeks seems like a long time, and the grieving process is well underway after what appears to us to be a short time. When parents can visit frequently then the family relationship can be maintained. Although the child may be visibly upset by the parent's visits, the ongoing contact is essential, and the open feelings are a sign of continuing attachment to the parent.

Several authors have discussed the importance of regular contact between foster children and their biological parents (Ner Litner, "The Importance of the Natural Parents to the Child in Placement," Child Welfare, March 1975; and Almeda R. Jolowicz, "The Hidden Parent, Some Effects of Concealment of the Parents' Life Upon the Child's Use of a Foster Home," Federal Security Agency, November, 1968). The overriding reason for this is to maintain the parent/child attachment. As long as that bond remains the child will probably be glad to see his/her parents and will also grieve when they leave. The role of the agency foster family is to help the child deal with this sadness and uncertainty, not to cover it by forbidding visits. It is important for children to continue to see their parents, complete with inadequacies, even when parents are reluctant. When children don't see parents for long periods of time they tend to idealize them to the point where they have great difficulty adjusting to the realities of their parents' weaknesses and failures. When the plan for placement is return home, then the continuity and maintenance of the parent/child attachment is of primary importance. If the child perceives the loss as permanent and moves through to acceptance of complete loss, s/he may never be able to form as close an attachment again. The more different figures in a child's life, the more desperately s/he will attempt to cling to one primary parenting figure. It is the role of those of us working with children to help keep that relationship intact through visits, pictures of the parents, and talking about the missing parent.

1.58 Planning Permanent Separation

When the plan of placement is, or becomes, permanent separation of child and parent, then the casework plan is somewhat different. Here the goal is to assist the child in moving through the stages of grief to the point of acceptance that the parent is gone, as permanently as if by death. Even in cases where the parents may continue to be around, the child needs to separate emotionally in order to form attachments in an adoptive or permanent foster home.

You and the foster family can help by openly discussing the factual information about the parental failure to provide for the child and by not backing away from the pain that grieving causes the child. In addition, for the child who is moving to adoption, you need to openly discuss with the child such things as who s/he is as a person, separation from biological and adoptive parents, what adoption means and how it differs from foster care. Specifically, this means that foster care is temporary, and that if there are problems they may often be worked out by the child having to move. In adoption, the goal is permanence, meaning that problems are faced in such a way as to work them out and keep the child in as part of the family.

Another tool for planning permanent separation is the lifebook which is referred to in Chapter II, Step 6, number 2 (Preparing the Child and The Family).

1.59 Working With the Biological and Foster Parents

Work with biological parents during the placement period is frequently neglected. Parents also experience separation grief coupled with tremendous feelings of guilt. Their response is often one of anger towards the agency, you and the foster parents, unrealistic bargaining, and despair or hopelessness. Your role is to clarify with parents the steps in the grief process, and to help them channel their energy into return of the child. Visiting, as discussed above, is to be encouraged as is open and regular contact between foster and biological parents. In some cases an exception should be made to these contacts. In the case where the biological parents have severe emotional or behavior problems, it may be better that foster and biological parents not have contact. Anger and jealousy towards foster parents should be discussed, and you should help the biological family recognize its feelings of guilt and loss, and the importance of working with foster parents. Information about separation and attachment and child development, given to parents during this time can be important to their current and future parenting abilities.

Two pieces of information that are useful to share are: 1) Studies have shown that children have great difficulty in loving two or more persons, especially when those people don't get along. When two divorced parents, or foster and biological parents, can cooperate and respect one another, there is a greater likelihood that the child can care about both. When they compete and ask for the child to choose, s/he is torn and seldom makes a choice. 2) The child, in experiencing anger-grief, may be very critical and cruel to the person s/he loves most, namely the parent. Parents should be prepared for this fact with information and follow-up discussion and empathy.

1.6 Returning the Child to His/Her Own Home

The final phase of placement is the return of the child to his/her own home. Depending upon the length of separation, this move can be as traumatic for the child as the first. Generally, the longer the separation and the fewer the contacts with the biological parents, the more difficult the move will be for the child. Plans for a move home should follow the same steps as before. The reason for the move should be clear, and plans should be discussed with all parties including child, biological parents and foster parents. Visits and preparations should begin before the child goes home with open discussion of feelings, fears and anxiety. Foster parents will now be experiencing the feelings of separation and loss and should receive support and understanding. This is especially true in the stage of anger where the child and foster parent may find fault with one another and/or the agency in preparing themselves for the upcoming separation. Here, you need to give information, listen and assess carefully what is happening, and resist both getting defensive and rushing too quickly into moving a child.

Following the child's return, you will need to follow through as the child may experience grieving for the loss of the foster family. This grief, coupled with the anger at the natural family for their previous abandonment can lead to a lengthy period of testing. You must prepare parents for this potential by describing possible behaviors, explaining the frustrations the parents may feel and assuring them of agency support. Due to the previous relationship, parents may hesitate to discuss problems based on their fears that the child will be removed again. You will usually need to actively educate parents about three things - child behaviors, parental frustration and agency support.

You will also need to provide support to the foster parents as they resolve their feelings of loss. Ideally, foster and biological parents will be helped to work together to maintain contact as appropriate to the child's needs. Regardless of the manner of their interaction, you will often be caught in the middle of the strong feelings experienced by children and adults alike. The open expression of feelings is preferable to the denial and suppression of grief. However, the worker who is in the middle of this anger and grief can be drained by the experience. It is important for you to recognize the necessary stages of grief and to facilitate its resolution. It is also important for you to get support for this emotional drain through supervision, peers, and through appropriate work and leisure time structuring.

1.7 Conclusion

Children form attachments to parenting figures as a result of the early interplay of adult and child during the daily routine of caretaking and play. These attachments are essential to the child's development of identity, the ability to learn and explore and the development of future emotional attachments. Separation of a child from his/her "psychological parent" leads to a feeling of loss and grief. The child's sense of time, which is based on needs - not clocks - makes this period of separation crucial and frequently damaging to the attachment process. Any separation can lead to a lessening in the child's ability to form future attachments, and several separations can permanently restrict a child's ability to develop close personal relationships.

The symptoms of the reactions to separations are unique to each person, but follow the five stages of grief which are 1) denial and isolation, 2) anger, 3) bargaining, 4) depression, and 5) acceptance. Sleeping and eating disturbances are frequent symptoms of separation anxiety as well as a wide range of behaviors related to denial and anger.

Finally, work with families separated by placement should focus on honest, open communication with all parties about the reasons for placement and plans and time frames for reunification. Maintenance of the parent-child attachment through frequent visits is strongly encouraged with follow-up casework services to biological and foster families as well as to children about the effects of separation and grief on all parties.

SEPARATION AND PLACEMENT

Separation experiences in childhood can be disrupting to the child's normal growth. Separation of a child from his family is, therefore, warranted only when the subsequent placement can better meet the child's needs. If children are to benefit from placement, their anxieties must be recognized, understood, and dealt with. CES staff should be geared towards minimizing the potential disturbances, and techniques should be used which are appropriate to the ages and situations of the children and adults involved. The following material has been compiled to help the emergency intake worker, emergency foster family worker, and emergency foster family parents understand the traumatic effects of separation and to provide suggested techniques for minimizing these effects.

Psychological Tasks a Child is Faced with during Separation and Placement

- The child must master those feelings which are caused by being separated from his parents.
- In addition, the child has to master those feelings created by being placed with new parents.
- The child must also deal with subsequent separations from these new parents.
- Finally, the child has to deal with the problems of overcoming the threat of being close to his new parents.

Meaning of Separation and Placement to the Child

- When a child is separated from his natural parents, he usually experiences feelings of abandonment.
- The child often feels as though he is totally responsible for being abandoned by his parents.
- Blaming himself for the abandonment usually helps the child deny his anger at his parents.
- The child usually believes he was separated from his parents due to some problem he is having within the particular stage of development he is going through. For instance, a two year old child might believe his parents abandoned him because he was not learning to be toilet trained as quickly as his parents wished.
- The separated child, as a result, tends to fear punishment for his misdeeds. The younger child may expect to be totally abandoned by his parents and then to die, while the older child may fear being physically attacked and mutilated.

Anxiety Symptoms

Because children repress these feelings and fears to varying degrees, a number of anxiety symptoms may become evident. The emergency foster care worker and parents should be familiar with such anxiety symptoms as restlessness and hyperactivity, tenseness, vomiting, sleep disturbances, crying, eating and bowel upsets, thumb-sucking, bed-rocking, head-banging,

Reprint from: "Separation and Placement", CES25, from Comprehensive Emergency Services, Training Guide, 2nd Edition, National Center for Comprehensive Emergency Services to Children, Nashville, Tenn., pp. 171-176.

and masturbation. Varying degrees of resentment, withdrawal, depression, and despair may also be evident.

How the Child Attempts to Overcome the Feelings Caused by Separation and Placement.

- Children often try to cope with new situations in the same way they handled similar problems in the past.
- When some children anticipate being treated painfully, they try to overcome their fear by being the one to do the hurting.
- Some children will actively cause the thing they fear the most in an effort to overcome their fear about what they expect their new parents to do to them.
- Some children will reproduce situations in which anger toward their parents first occurred so as to punish themselves and relieve their guilt feelings.
- Children will often manipulate the feelings of their new parents in order to make them angry. This will effectively create distance between the child and his new parents and prevent emotional closeness.
- Only when a child lets himself become aware of his anxieties is he able to test them against his present situation. He then can be reassured that he will not be rejected or punished by his new parents. This will emotionally free him to benefit from the placement.

Traumatic After-Effects of Separation

The age of the child at separation and the amount of anxieties he represses influence the degree to which he will be permanently affected from separation and placement. The child under six seems to be most vulnerable to scarring. There are seven types of personality scars which could result from repression of anxieties over separation and placement.

- The child might continue to expect all future close relationships to result in abandonment or rejection.
- The child might expect all future separation experiences to occur in a similar way to what happened when he was separated from his own parents.
- Future situations where separation might occur could arouse anxiety and cause the child to use his old patterns of mastering anxiety.
- The child might fear being emotionally close to others.
- The child might also have an unconscious need to be rejected.
- The child may have a future tendency to reproduce himself in his own children or do to them what has been done to him.
- Repression of separation anxieties will prevent the child from functioning at his full physical, intellectual, and emotional capacities.

Techniques for Avoiding Traumatic After-Effects

When reading the following material, the emergency intake worker, the emergency foster care worker, and emergency foster care parents should keep in mind that there are several situations in which children are separated from familiar or "old" parents and placed with "new" parents.

Sometimes the hardest situation to work with is that in which the child is removed from his natural parents and placed in emergency foster care. Many of the recommended procedures and techniques will seem too ideal and impractical in these emergency situations. It is often not practical to expect a great deal of cooperation from the natural parents in preparing the child for separation. However, there will be situations where the child is being separated from emergency foster parents and placed in regular care or is returned to the natural parents' home. In these situations, there is more time and cooperation from foster parents and natural parents so that the recommended procedures and techniques can be used effectively.

The emergency intake worker, together with the foster care worker, should prepare the child and his natural parents for separation. The workers should first help the child's parents deal with their feelings about the placement, their feelings of failure as parents, and their own problems with separation. The parents should be encouraged to take as much responsibility as possible for preparing the child for separation. However, as mentioned above, it is often more realistic to find the parents extremely negative about the separation and therefore not willing to take much responsibility in preparing the child. In these situations, it will be important for the workers to help prepare the child in areas where his parents cannot or will not.

The steps which are recommended for preparing the child for separation may not always be possible in emergency situations where the child is being separated from natural parents. However, the steps can be used very effectively to prevent traumatic after-effects of separation in situations where the child is being transferred from emergency foster care to planned care, or his natural parents' home. The worker might provide the child with a picture of his new home and parents as well as describe the appearance of his new room and home and what his new family is like. The child should be allowed to have a brief visit in his new home, followed by a period of time back in his old home. The child should have a chance to express his feelings concerning the separation both verbally and behaviorally. Next, the child should have a longer visit in his new home and a brief spell back in his old home before the actual move is made. The old parents should be allowed and encouraged to continue contacts with the child after the transfer.

As already mentioned, these steps may not always be practical in emergency situations. However, in crisis situations it is still important that the child be allowed to have continued contact with his old parents since they are his only security and provide him with his only sense of belonging. Planned visits for parents with the child in his foster home can do much to help the child resolve his feeling of having been totally abandoned. It is reassuring to him if his parents know and show approval of the foster parents.

Separation Work with Young Children

Since direct experience rather than language is the primary instrument of learning and communicating for young children, the basic tool of separation work with them is the provision of meaningful direct experience. Several types of direct experiences should be used in separation work with young children, and here again these experiences can be used more effectively in situations other than separation of the child from his natural parents.

- The child should be present when meetings of his old and new parents occur in his old and new homes.
- The young baby should experience being fed, placed in bed, having his diapers changed, being bathed, etc., by his parent in the presence and with assistance from his old parent.
- Familiar toys, objects, foods, and routines should be used in the new home so that the child will have fewer new experiences to cope with.

As is illustrated by this case example, emergency caretakers and homemakers can also provide a bridge for the child as he moves into placement; thus, making the time for an orderly planned placement.

Case Example

A father calls CES Friday afternoon asking for placement of his five children, ages ten to three. The mother left a week ago taking the oldest girl twelve years old with her. She had not been heard from since. He suspected she was with relatives in a nearby city, but they refused to let him know.

Mr. Smith and his wife had experienced a very stormy marriage with frequent separations. He described Mrs. Smith's care of the children as poor, even when she was there as she refused to keep house or fix meals on time. However, the children missed their mother and were upset as she had never left before for any extended period. Mr. Smith, a concrete finisher, had been off from work this week but had to go back on Monday or face losing his job. The warm summer months meant long working hours for him. He could not find anyone to care for the children. If he didn't work, he would lose the house, furniture, car--everything. He certainly didn't want to place the children, but says there is no choice at this point.

Yes, he had made repeated efforts the past week to locate his wife. He had driven to the nearby city where relatives lived but no one would give him any information. He had "reached the end of his rope".

The emergency intake worker discussed with Mr. Smith possible alternatives to include placement of an emergency homemaker and day care for the two preschool age children. That would be fine. He thought he could manage nights, but he would have to work from 6:00 a.m. to 7 or 8:00 p.m. for the next several weeks. The company he worked for was pushed to finish a job before bad weather set in. All the concrete finishers were being asked to work overtime. He really needed the money. They had so many bills.

The intake worker introduced Mr. Smith to the emergency homemaker. They went over the children's schedule to include when each child caught the bus for school and returned. He also went over his work schedule and gave telephone numbers where he could be reached in case of an emergency.

It was agreed the emergency homemaker would come out Saturday morning to meet the children. Mr. Smith would show the homemaker about children's clothes and things in the kitchen. It was agreed the emergency homemaker would come to begin her assignment Monday morning at 5:30 a.m. She would stay until Mr. Smith returned. This was to be her daily schedule.

A part of the homemaker's responsibilities to the children for the first three weeks she was at the Smith's included reassuring the children and dealing with their feelings about their mother's absence. She observed that the younger child had regressed and began soiling himself again. John, the oldest son, expressed many physical complaints to include stomach and headaches. He remained withdrawn until they had a long talk during which he wept and expressed much feeling about her being there. He didn't want her there. His mother would return if she would go away and leave them alone. The homemaker expressed understanding of John's feelings. She was sure he must be angry having a stranger come into the home to take over. John seemed relieved to direct his anger and hostility toward the emergency homemaker and not be condemned.

When the decision was made to place the children, there was a joint conference of all CES staff to discuss how much longer the emergency homemaker would stay and what should be done to prepare the children for placement.

The father discussed placement with the children, explaining since the mother could not be located after a month, they would have to go live with a foster family until he paid off some of the debts. He thought they could get back together when school was out or before the next school year.

Mr. Smith had explained to the outreach worker that his decision was finally prompted by his need to begin working out of town. His financial problems were such that he decided to rent the house, take less expensive lodging, and work overtime until he worked himself free of indebtedness. He would have to travel to southern states during the winter months.

The children were encouraged to talk with their father openly about placement. It was understood that the placement would be temporary. He would be able to reunite the family by next summer.

In the next week the emergency homemaker encouraged the children to select toys and personal items, such as radios, stuffed animals, etc. they would take along. She took them for preplacement visits along with the outreach worker. They answered many questions about the foster parents. As the time drew near for placement, it was necessary to reassure everyone that their new parents would be alright.

Mr. Smith was introduced to the foster parents; and on Sunday, his only day off, the homemaker took him along with the children for a visit with the foster parents. Mr. Smith was relieved that the foster parents "seemed alright".

After the placement and as work continued with Mr. Smith, the children were visited by their father each weekend and finally by their mother upon her return some six months later. During the early weeks of placement, Mr. Smith was often invited to dinner and to accompany the children and foster parents to church. During a period when the father was ill, the children were encouraged to mail cards and talk to him by telephone nightly. When the mother reappeared, the children again displayed acting out behavior which was trying for the foster parents. The foster parents had to be helped to understand this to enable them to help the children through this period. This created some delay in reuniting the family, as the staff assisted the parents in resolving some of their problems and helping the children make an adjustment to their mother and work through their renewed feelings about her desertion.

Adapted from: Krugman, Dorothy C. "Working with Separation," *Child Welfare*, 50(9): 528-537, November, 1971.

Littner, Ner. *Some Traumatic Effects of Separation and Placement* (New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 1972).

II. Learning Objectives

II. Learning Objectives

If the issue of attachment and separation is discussed in the four core courses (HBSE, policy, research, and practice) as recommended in this outline, a student who completes all four courses should:

(1) Be knowledgeable of the impact of separation on families and children

(2) Appreciate the validity of services to the birth family in order to prevent separation and out of home placement

(3) Be knowledgeable of ways to improve attachments between parents and children to prevent family break up.

(4) Understand the normal attachment and separation processes in the development of human relationships

(5) Be able to identify signs of attachment and assess the depth of attachment

(6) Be knowledgeable of the best methods of working with a family that has been divided by placement

(7) Accept the validity of maintaining contacts between parents and children in placement

(8) Be able to describe methods of practice that will reduce the pain of separation as a child moves into foster care, into an adoptive home, or back into his own home

(9) Be able to identify and recommend agency policies that would encourage the attachment of parents and children and which take into consideration the impact of separation

(10) Be knowledgeable of the implications of research studies which address issues of attachment, separation, parental visiting, etc.

III. Case Studies

III. Case Studies

Included in this section of the outline are five case studies of children that illustrate various issues in the attachment and separation process. All five case studies were developed by Dr. Vera Fahlberg, a nationally recognized expert on the treatment problems of foster children. Dr. Fahlberg is presently the medical director of Forest Heights Lodge, Evergreen, Colorado, a psychiatric facility for children and adolescents.

The case examples (A-E) taken from two workbooks developed by Dr. Fahlberg that have become Chapters V and VI in the manual Training In The Adoption Of Children With Special Needs, Project CRAFT, University of Michigan, School of Social Work, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1980. The examples are being reprinted here with the permission of Dr. Fahlberg.

The five case studies and the issues they illustrate are listed below:

A. Identifying Signs of Attachment - Danny's Case
B. Normal Reactions To Separation - John's Case
C. Identifying Signs of Lack of Attachment - Roberta's Case
D. Encouraging Attachment - Sharon's Case
E. Identifying Underlying Messages - Merrilee's Case

Included in Part F. of this section are five case studies that illustrate the reactions of parents to separation from their children. These case illustrations, which were developed by Jan McCarthy, Project Associate of the Region III Child Welfare Training Center, are based on the experiences of five parents whose children were placed in foster care.

A. Exercise #1: Identifying Signs of Attachment

Danny's Case

INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose: To help you learn what types of comments and/or observations in case records aid in assessing a child's attachment.

How to do it:

1. Read Danny's case history on the next page.
2. Look at Observation Checklist #2: What to Look for in Assessing Attachment - One to Five Years.
3. Using the Exercise #1 Worksheet, list comments and/or observations from the case record that you feel will aid in assessing Danny's attachment to each of his parents. Consider his attachment to each parent individually.
4. After working on your list, look at page 36 where a sample analysis of the case appears and compare your worksheet with the sample.

Taken from:

Fahlberg, Vera, "Attachment and Separation: A Workbook" (C 1979 Vera Fahlberg), Training In The Adoption of Children With Special Needs. Project CRAFT and The University of Michigan, School of Social Work. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1980.

Exercise #1: Identifying Signs of Attachment

DANNY'S CASE

Danny, age two and a half, the son of Carl and Tammy T. was born prematurely and with a cleft palate. He had a history of failure to thrive during infancy. He was hospitalized repeatedly for this condition, and in the hospital he always gained weight. At six months he "accidentally" broke his leg while his father was overseas. At present, Danny has been in foster care for several months. Reportedly, Carl abused Danny leading to a black eye and bruises on the buttocks. It was Tammy who called the caseworker and reported the abuse, knowing her report probably would lead to foster care.

The parents have not followed through with therapy as ordered by the court. They recently separated and are planning a divorce. The father in particular has asked for Danny's custody.

In her interview, Tammy reported that Danny is in foster care "because my husband got mad and hit him". She does not see Danny as a child who easily frustrates adults although she stated that she gets frustrated when "he deliberately wets his pants". She believes Danny closely resembles his father. Tammy was unable to give any information about what Danny likes to play or how he kept himself occupied when he was at home. She stated he is affectionate and "easy going now".

When the father was interviewed, he readily admitted spanking Danny excessively with a belt, but stated that the black eye occurred when Danny ran from him to avoid a spanking, slipped, and hit his eye on the corner of the bed. The discipline was taking place because Danny had repeatedly gotten out of bed when put down for a nap. Tammy was napping at the time according to Carl and did not see what happened. Carl is able to give considerable information about Danny's likes and dislikes. He, too, sees Danny as resembling himself.

Tammy initially refused to visit with Danny in the nursery at the time of the evaluation because "he is not interested in seeing me; he is more interested in the toys". Carl played with Danny in the nursery while Tammy was being interviewed. Danny did not protest when his father left the nursery to go with the interviewer. The father reassured Danny that he would be back shortly and made a point of leaving his coat in the nursery as he told Danny that he would be back.

Exercise #1: Identifying Signs of Attachment

DANNY'S CASE - 2

When we tried to test Danny, he protested about the separation and asked his father to go with him. On the way to the office, Danny imitated his father's walk with thumbs in pocket. He crawled up into his father's lap in the office, took off his dad's glasses, and put them on. His dad's comment as he took his glasses back was "Oh, you remember our little game". Carl was interested and pleased with Danny's performance levels during the testing. Although we had some difficulty understanding Danny's speech, Carl did not.

When Tammy came in mid-way during the testing, Danny interrupted his task and ran to her with arms up-raised. She picked him up, and her affect was appropriate. When his parents left, Danny indicated that he did not want them to. He clung to his mother and clearly said "I want to go with you". He cried momentarily and tried to follow when they left, but he was easily distracted following their departure.

Exercise #1: Identifying Signs of Attachment

WORKSHEET

Danny and Mother	Danny and Father
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.

Exercise #1: Identifying Signs of Attachment

WORKSHEET - SAMPLE RESPONSE

Danny and Mother	Danny and Father
1. Danny ran to mother	1. Father knows Danny's likes and dislikes
2. Mother picked up Danny and showed affection	2. Carl played with Danny in nursery
3. Danny did not want his mother to leave	3. Carl left coat in nursery to reassure Danny that he would return
4.	4. Danny protested separation from father
5.	5. Danny imitated Father's walk
6.	6. Danny crawled on his father's lap
7.	7. Carl understood Danny's speech

B. Identifying Normal Reactions To Separation

John's Case

In helping a child handle a separation, it is useful to know what a "normal" reaction to separation is.

Bowlby ([illegible]) describes three stages that well-attached children go through when they are separated from the person to whom they are attached. These stages are most evident in the younger child. They are:

- the child protests vigorously and makes attempts to recover his mother, such as going to the door and trying to find her;
- the child despairs of recovering his mother, but he continues to be watchful. He appears to be preoccupied constantly and depressed. When a car drives up or when there is a noise at the door, he becomes alert, hoping that his mother is returning; and
- the child becomes emotionally detached and appears to lose interest in mothers.

What follows is a case example of a child who was well attached and then separated.

Case Example

> *At the time we saw John, he was four and had been in foster care for about three months. During his first six weeks in care, he was placed in a foster care receiving home. During his stay in the receiving home John was fussy and cried constantly.*
>
> *In his second foster placement he was not so much fussy as withdrawn. He played for hours by himself, talking to himself in baby voices and making peculiar sounds. He had good eye contact with us when we examined him, but he seemed indiscriminately affectionate; he seemed to respond equally warmly to all adults. He was at his age level on developmental tests and was in good contact with reality.*
>
> *The history revealed that John had lost his mother when he was eighteen months old. His father became his primary caretaker. The father planned a major move across the country. While he was moving and getting settled, he left John with an aunt. John had had almost no contact with the aunt before he was left there.*
>
> *With the aunt he became very fussy. He regressed in toiletting and smeared feces. He alternated between being very depressed and having temper tantrums. The aunt had placed John in foster care.*

Taken from: Fahlberg, Vera, "Attachment and Separation: A Workbook" (C 1979 Vera Fahlberg), Training In The Adoption of Children With Special Needs. Project CRAFT and the University of Michigan, School of Social Work. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1980.

> *When John was in the second foster placement, his father came for his first visit with the child. John's face "lit up" when he first saw his father. He then looked apprehensive and acted ambivalent about getting close to his father. His father initiated many positive interactions with John. Eventually, John was able to say "Don't ever leave me again, Daddy."*

John's history illustrates the stages that Bowlby describes as common in well-attached children who are separated. Because a history of strong attachment is rare in the child welfare system or because workers fail to recognize this sort of behavior for what it is, there is a danger that children who have this kind of reaction may be classified as "severely disturbed".

It is not unusual for a child to act aggressively during separations from his parents and be very ambivalent toward them when he visits them or returns home. The child does not plan to act this way but does so in response to unconscious stimuli. The function of this behavior is to assist in the reunion process and to discourage his parents from leaving him again. Hence, this behavior promotes rather than discourages bonding.

When this kind of behavior occurs during visits between parent and child, all involved may tend to say that the visits are upsetting the child and should be stopped. Similarly, if this kind of behavior occurs when the child is returned home to his parents, workers sometimes misinterpret the behavior and assume the parents are doing something wrong. The parents may feel that way too. Actually, the child's negative behavior stems from a healthy need. When a child returns home from foster care, workers need to make special efforts to support the parents and help them handle the child's anger over the past separation.

C. Exercise #3: Identifying Signs of Lack of Attachment

Roberta's Case

INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose: To help you learn to identify signs of lack of attachment or faulty attachment.

How to do it:

1. Read Roberta's case history on the next page.
2. Using the worksheet, list comments and/or observations from the case record that you feel will indicate Roberta's lack of attachment or faulty attachment.
3. After working on your list, look at page 60 where a sample analysis of the case appears and compare your worksheet with the sample.

Taken from:

Fahlberg, Vera, "Attachment and Separation: A Workbook" (C 1979 Vera Fahlberg), Training In The Adoption of Children With Special Needs. Project CRAFT and The University of Michigan, School of Social Work. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1980.

Exercise #3: Identifying Signs of Lack of Attachment

ROBERTA'S CASE

Roberta, who is now eight and a half years old, was abandoned by her birth mother when she was one year old. At that time, she was functioning at a six to eight month old developmental level. During the following year in foster care she closed most of the gaps between her chronological age and her developmental age. She was placed for adoption at age two.

The adoption disrupted a year and a half ago because "Roberta never really got close" to the adoptive parents. She has lived in three foster homes since then. Her pattern in foster care has been to be superficially compliant but after several months the foster parents describe her as being "sneaky" and "there is just something about her".

In her present foster home the history reveals that she sneaks food and hides it in her room. This behavior tends to make her foster mom very angry. She occasionally sleepwalks and cries out in her sleep. She wets the bed several times a week. She loves to help her foster mother in the kitchen but "forgets" her routine chores such as picking up her room and stripping her bed when it is wet.

Roberta has difficulty getting along with her foster siblings. She takes the teen-aged daughter's make-up and then denies taking it. When she plays games with the other pre-adolescents, she always disrupts the game if she sees that she is not going to win. Roberta becomes totally enraged by events that lead to irritation or annoyance in most children.

At school she does well in reading, but hates math. She does complete her papers, but they are frequently so messy that they are unreadable. She is frequently out of her seat without permission, she talks out in class, and is always either the first or the last in line.

The teacher reports that Roberta has difficulty getting along with peers. She has just started third grade but she prefers to play with the first graders at recess. In the foster home, too, she plays best with a younger foster sibling whom she tries to boss.

When introduced to a female psychologist Roberta's first comment was "Oh, I hope you are my new caseworker: I just love to get new caseworkers". When asked how she felt about moms, her comment was "Well, I don't like moms too well. They always know what you are doing".

Exercise #3: Identifying Signs of Lack of Attachment

WORKSHEET

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

Exercise #3: Identifying Signs of Lack of Attachment

WORKSHEET - SAMPLE RESPONSE

1. "Roberta never really got close" (adoptive parents)
2. "Sneaky." "Something about her" (foster parents)
3. Night terrors.
4. Enuretic (lack of self awareness?)
5. Steals, doesn't do chores, lies (conscience development)
6. Over-reacts (i.e., when losing games)
7. Can't get along with kids her own age.
8. Bossy with younger kids (over-competent?)
9. "Indiscriminate affection" (i.e., teachers and social workers
10. Not in touch with feelings (i.e., "I just love to get a new case worker!")
11. Messy papers? (fine motor developmental delay or lack of self-esteem *or* doesn't want to mind)
12.

D. Exercise #4: Encouraging Attachment

Sharon's Case

INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose: To help you practice defining ways to encourage attachment.

How to do it:

1. Read Sharon's case history on the next page.
2. Using Worksheet #1, list as many ways as you can think of that the family might use in helping Sharon develop attachment to them.
3. After working on your list, look at the sample that one worker developed.
4. Now, pick a child in your caseload who has moved recently. First, summarize the case. Then, develop the same type of list for your own case as you did for Sharon. Use Worksheet #2 for this task.

Taken from:

Fahlberg, Vera, "Attachment and Separation: A Workbook" (C 1979 Vera Fahlberg), Training In The Adoption of Children With Special Needs. Project CRAFT and The University of Michigan, School of Social Work. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1980.

Exercise #4: Encouraging Attachment

SHARON'S CASE

Sharon is an eight-year-old girl who is being placed for adoption in a family with three older boys. Past history reveals that Sharon experienced considerable emotional and physical deprivation, rejection, and physical abuse from her birth parents. She has had seven moves since she first entered the foster care system at age three.

Sharon has many fears including fear of the dark and fear of new situations. She is prone to nightmares. There is a history of both daytime and nighttime wetting. She is a very demanding child who verbally pressures and manipulates adults. She gets little pleasure from being a child and prefers to "pretend" that she is an adolescent going out on dates. She is very seductive in her relationships with males.

Sharon has many gaps in her basic fund of knowledge; she exhibits problems with logical thinking and basic cause and effect. Sharon has many problems with lying; she tends to "forget" what she chooses not to hear. Her lying extends even to saying "that is my favorite food" when in reality it is a food she dislikes. Other times her lying is aimed at keeping out of trouble.

She has marked difficulties with peer relationships. She does well in the self-help skills. She likes to help with household tasks. In school, she is reading above grade level but has some difficulty with math. She shows appropriate affect and is an attractive girl who is quite outgoing. Her self-esteem is poor as indicated by comments such as "something is real wrong with me", when she makes an error. She is able to talk about feelings and can tell of many ways that she and her present foster parents have fun together.

Exercise #4: Encouraging Attachment

WORKSHEET #1

Arousal/Relaxation Cycle	Positive Interaction Cycle	Claiming Behaviors

Exercise #4: Encouraging Attachment

WORKSHEET #1: SAMPLE RESPONSE

Arousal/Relaxation Cycle	Positive Interaction Cycle	Claiming Behaviors
1. Parents could sit with Sharon after her awaking from nightmares 2. Help Sharon talk about her fears. 3. Arrange a visit with previous foster parents 4. Help Sharon talk about past foster families 5. Develop a Life Book 6. Confront Sharon about lies or stealing and assist her in correcting the situation and support her afterwards	1. Doing household tasks with Sharon 2. Looking at Life Book 3. Help Sharon with math homework 4. Organize outings for Sharon and her new brothers. 5. Mother give Sharon hugs, kisses, physical closeness 6. Give Sharon good choices 7. Get Sharon to join a group (i.e., Brownies) 8. Explain sex with Sharon	1. Get a family portrait welcoming Sharon 2. Have a family get-together to introduce Sharon. 3. Buy new clothes for Sharon (will also positively reinforce her attractiveness) 4. Sharon is to practice calling her new parents "mom" and "dad"

E . Exercise #1: Identifying Underlying Messages

Merrilee's

INSTRUCTIONS

Purpose:

1. To help you learn to identify how children perceive underlying messages at the time of moves so that desired messages may be conveyed and undesirable ones avoided.
2. To help you learn to identify how children communicate their feelings through their behaviors.

How to do it:

1. Read Merrilee's case history that begins on the following page.
2. Using Exercise #1 Worksheet 1, page 17, identify the possible underlying messages to Merrilee associated with the things that happened to her in placement.
3. After completing your list, look at page 18 for one person's comments.
4. Using Exercise #1, Worksheet 2, page 19, identify the possible underlying messages to the adoptive parents as they relate to Merrilee's behaviors.
5. After completing your list, look at page 20 for one observer's interpretations and comments about Merrilee's behavior.

Taken from:

Fahlberg, Vera, "Helping Children When They Must Move" (C 1979 Vera Fahlberg), Training In The Adoption of Children With Special Needs. Project CRAFT and The University of Michigan, School of Social Work. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1980.

Exercise #1: Identifying Underlying Messages at the Time of Moves

MERRILEE'S CASE

Merrilee lived with her birth mother until she was sixteen months old. During Merrilee's first year, her mother had been reported for neglect. It was not too serious, and Merrilee remained in the home. When Merrilee was fourteen months old, her mother gave birth to a baby boy and after that, began to neglect her more seriously. Merrilee was placed in foster care while her baby brother remained with the mother. Later he, too, was placed in foster care although in a different home.

When Merrilee came into foster care, the agency staff-felt that it would be too confusing for her to see her birth mother. The worker recommended an "adjustment period" for both mother and child with no visits. After this initial adjustment period, both Merrilee and her birth mother seemed to have "adjusted" so well to the separation that both the mother and worker were reluctant to initiate contact between the two. The mother relinquished her rights after six months, never having seen Merrilee again.

Merrilee was a bright and precocious child who became a valued member of the foster family. The foster family wanted to adopt Merrilee; however, the agency was reluctant to allow this. They opposed foster parent adoption in general. In addition, they were concerned about confidentiality because the foster parents knew who the birth mother was. However, the foster parents had had an application in for some time to adopt an infant. Soon after Merrilee's placement with the foster famly, an infant boy became available for adoption through a private agency. This boy was placed for adoption with the foster parents, and another adoptive family was sought for Merrilee.

An adoptive family who lived 350 miles away as selected. The initial placement was that the adoptive family would come and pick up Merrilee at the social services building and take her for an all-day outing. They planned to return her to the social services building so that her worker could take her to her foster home for her last night there. The following day the foster mother was to bring her into the agency; the adoptive family would then take her to their home. There was no plan for the foster and adoptive parents to meet.

This first visit, an all-day outing, went very well, as first visits frequently do. The adoptive family asked Merrilee if she would like to spend the night with them and she said yes. They called the caseworker who agreed with the change in plan. The following morning, the adoptive parents brought Merrilee back to the agency to say her final good-bye to her foster mother. Her foster father who was at work and who knew that he would be upset by the separation, said his "good-byes" to Merrilee over the phone. The worker took her from the room with her adoptive parents to a room down the hall. Her foster

Exercise #1: Identifying Underlying Messages at the Time of Moves (2)

MERRILEE'S CASE

mother was waiting there to give Merrilee her belongings and to say good-bye. Merrilee then returned to the room where her adoptive parents were waiting.

The adoptive parents changed Merrilee's name so that she could feel as if she were having a "fresh start" in her new family. Merrilee had long, naturally curly hair. Her foster mother had frequently brushed Merrilee's hair. She did this as a way of being physically close and nurturing with Merrilee. She also used this as a way to raise Merrilee's self esteem by commenting what beautiful hair she had and how pretty she was. The adoptive mother didn't know this history and suggested that Merrilee have her hair cut, "like your older sister's hair." Merrilee agreed.

I met Merrilee when she was four and a half years old. At that time, she was constantly fighting control battles with her mother. For example, she was not to leave the yard without permission. Merrilee didn't sneak out of the yard; instead, she would sit perched on the fence until she was sure her mother was looking out of the kitchen window. Then, she would go over the fence. If she were asked to do something such as help set the table, it never quite got done.

In some respects she seemed overcompetent, never asking for help. Merrilee had trouble sitting in a comfortable fashion on her parents's laps. She couldn't cuddle. She was prone to many fears, but the most prominent one was her fear of strangers. Whenever the family had company, Merrilee would become alternately hyperactive and clingy, demanding a lot of attention.

Exercise #1: Identifying Underlying Messages

WORKSHEET 1

Things That Happened to Merrilee	Possible Underlying Message to Merrilee
1. Foster care placement soon after birth of brother	1.
2. No contact with mother soon after placement or ever again	2.
3. No contact with brother ever	3.
4. Placement of a baby boy with foster parents soon before Merrilee's adoptive placement	4.
5. Merrilee learned to trust and love foster parents and then had to move	5.
6. The moving plan of one pre-placement visit	6.
7. No return to foster home after initial visit	7.
8. Lack of direct contact with foster father for good-byes	8.
9. Lack of contact between foster and adoptive parents	9.
10. Change of name at age 2-1/2	10.
11. Cutting of hair	11.
12. Lack of contact of any type (no pictures, letters or direct contact) with foster parents after move	12.

Exercise #1: Identifying Underlying Messages

WORKSHEET 1: SAMPLE RESPONSE

Things That Happened to Merrilee	Possible Underlying Message to Merrilee
1. Foster care placement soon after birth of brother	1. Mom loves brother better than Merrilee.
2. No contact with mother soon after placement or ever again	2. Mom disappeared or doesn't love Merrilee.
3. No contact with brother ever	3. Brothers and sisters aren't important.
4. Placement of a baby boy with foster parents soon before Merrilee's adoptive placement	4. When baby boyes come along, Merrilee has to go.
5. Merrilee learned to trust and love foster parents and then had to move	5. When you love and trust some body, you lose them.
6. The moving plan of one pre-placement visit	6. The feelings she has for the foster parents & fears she has of new people aren't important
7. No return to foster home after initial visit	7. People can disappear and strangers can kidnap you and keep you.
8. Lack of direct contact with foster father for good-byes	8. Foster father didn't care & it's not o.K. to have feelings
9. Lack of contact between foster and adoptive parents	9. The foster parents and adoptive parents don't like each other
10. Change of name at age 2-1/2	10. "Merrilee" was a bad girl
11. Cutting of hair	11. The way Merrilee was close to her foster mom isn't o.k. with this new mom.
12. Lack of contact of any type (no pictures, letters or direct contact) with foster parents after move	12. They disappeared.

Exercise #1: Identifying Underlying Messages

WORKSHEET 2

Merrilee's Behavior	Possible Underlying Message to Parents
1. Going over fence	1.
2. Making bed and picking up room without being asked (age 4-1/2)	2.
3. Not minding when asked to help	3.
4. Not being able to cuddle	4.
5. Fear of strangers	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.

Exercise #1: Identifying Underlying Messages

WORKSHEET 2: SAMPLE RESPONSE

Merrilee's Behavior	Possible Underlying Message to Parents
1. Going over fence	1. She's testing limits.
2. Making bed and picking up room without being asked (age 4-1/2)	2. She doesn't need parents.
3. Not minding when asked to help	3. She's defiant
4. Not being able to cuddle	4. She's cold. she doesn't have feelings; she doesn't love me.
5. Fear of strangers	5. She makes me look bad, as a parent, in front of others.
6.	6.
7.	7.

III. Case Studies

F. Identifying Parental Reactions to Separation

The experience of separation from a family member, especially a premature or unexpected separation, is painful for both children and adults. The previous case studies have primarily focused on the reactions of children to separation.

The purpose of the following case illustrations is to assist students to examine typical reactions and behaviors of parents to filial deprivation (the separation experience of parents when children leave). The five illustrations are of parents whose children were placed in foster care. Students should relate the parental behavior described to the phases of separation anxiety and discuss how to assist parents in working through each phase. The case illustrations represent the very unique and individual responses of each parent to separation from their children. It is important to keep this in mind when discussing each example, but also to recognize that even in their uniqueness, parents progress through certain general steps of the separation process.

The case illustrations are not intended to be complete case histories. Rather, they represent only a certain stage in the parents' progress. In most of these case examples, goals are not identified and service planning is not discussed.

Each case example is intended to facilitate discussion on the following very specific issues that the instructor might raise with the class:

(1) Identify the feelings that each parent is expressing.
(2) How do these feelings affect parental behavior?
(3) In what stage of the separation process does each parent seem to be?
(4) Discuss how to assist the parent in recognizing his feelings, the validity of these feelings, and how to cope with them.
(5) What might the worker do to help the parent move through each of the four phases described in the case illustrations?

The following case illustrations represent unique responses to the five phases of the separation (or grief) process:

Mr. Carter - Denial
Mrs. Brown - Anger
Mr. & Mrs. Dunlap - Bargaining
Mrs. Graham - Depression
Mrs. George - Acceptance

Mr. Carter

Mr. Carter's son Bobby, (age 15), had been in foster care for twelve years. Bobby's mother was deceased. His father's parental rights had been terminated when Bobby was six. At age 8, after several foster home placements, Bobby was placed in an adoptive home. After two years (but before finalization) that adoptive placement disrupted. Bobby had threatened many times to kill his younger adopted sisted in the home and his adoptive parents feared that he might do so. They viewed Bobby as severely disturbed. Bobby was placed in an out of state residential treatment center when the adoption disrupted. After three years, Bobby returned to his home community for foster care placement. At that time (age 13) he began to have contact with his natural father, Mr. Carter.

Mr. Carter had maintained contact with the agency (although not with Bobby directly) for many years because he had another child in foster care who was never placed for adoption. At the point that Bobby and Mr. Carter renewed their relationship Bobby was hyperactive, very immature in appearance and actions very demanding, paranoid and suspicious, and easily upset. He had formed no successful peer relationships, and handled all of his problems with peers or adults by threatening violence to himself or others or by running away. He quickly formed a very intense relationship with anyone who was kind to him. These relationships usually terminated as quickly as they were formed. His attitude toward his father was noncommittal. He liked to go places with him, but he did not trust him.

Mr. Carter was a chronic alcoholic, who had become physically disabled in a car accident while Bobby was in the adoptive home. He was unemployed and considered to be unemployable by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation due to his many failures to complete any type of rehabilitation program. He received SSI payments each month. He moved from relative to relative, rooming house to rooming house, and from one alcoholic treatment program to another. He was periodically placed in jail for fighting or vagrancy. When in a sober period, he would spend entire days in the reception room of the welfare department. He would appear at 9:00 a.m. with his lunch in hand and remain until 5:00 p.m. Mr. Carter knew many of the staff at the welfare department, and at times he demanded someone's immediate attention. At other times he sat quietly.

Whenever he had contact with Bobby's worker he told the worker that he was doing well. He discussed his conversations and visits with Bobby in very positive terms. He perceived Bobby to be proud of him and to want to live with him. He felt that he could adequately provide for Bobby and that he had overcome his alcoholism. He believed Bobby to be a happy, talkative boy with no major problems. He stated his intentions to help Bobby with his schooling. He felt that Bobby had not been properly educated. He did not think that it was unusual for Bobby to have no friends. He felt that whatever problems the agency believed that Bobby had would disappear if he (Mr. Carter) were in charge.

Points for Discussion

___ Have the students identify Mr. Carter's statements of denial and the feelings behind these statements.

___ What other feelings might Mr. Carter be experiencing about the nine year separation from his son?

___ How can Mr. Carter be helped to express and cope with feelings?

___ What might the worker have done to help Mr. Carter move through this period of denial?

___ If Mr. Carter recognizes that he is denying his own problems and Bobby's, how might this make him feel? Would he feel anger about the circumstances under which he and Bobby were living?

Mrs. Brown

Mr. and Mrs. Brown's four children (ages 2-9) had been in foster care for one year. They were placed in care due to lack of supervision, physical neglect (lack of food and clothing) and family instability. Their mother had voluntarily placed them once (for two months), the children had returned home, and they were court committed three months later after being left unattended by their mother for several hours. It had been one year since the court commitment.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown maintained a very volatile relationship with one another. She was easily intimidated by him, and when he was angry with her, she could not cope. Mr. Brown drank heavily and when drinking he was very critical of his wife and infrequently abused her physically. He worked as a cab driver part time, he lived intermittently with Mrs. Brown but more often with his steady girlfriend, and he was in poor health and on disability because he had "lupus". Mr. Brown did not request to be the caretaker for his children. If they were to return home they would live with Mrs. Brown, not with him. Mrs. Brown had been diagnosed as trainable retarded. She had spent several months in a state mental hospital because of her "nerves". Mrs. Brown was often confused and disoriented.

Mrs. Brown was very critical of the children's foster parents. She felt that they did not do enough for the children and that they were "nasty" to her. She believed that her mental health worker did not understand her. She felt that the agency worker was responsible for the children's placement, that the worker lied to her and did not know how to help her. She resented the intervention of a homemaker who attempted to teach her household management. She felt that her neighbors were not trust worthy and that they were spying on her. She believed that she would be able to provide a home for the children if her husband would just leave her alone. At one point Mrs. Brown called the worker and threatened to come to the agency and shoot "someone" if her children were not returned to her. She said that she was tired of "messing around with all this".

Points for Discussion

____ How does Mrs. Brown express her anger?

____ Note her tendencies to blame others for the children's placement.

____ How can the worker help Mrs. Brown deal with this anger?

____ Is she justified in her anger? If so, how can the worker recognize this and then help Mrs. Brown move beyond the anger?

The Dunlap Family

The Dunlap family had been involved with social agencies in several different locations for fifteen years. During these fifteen years the family had experienced several disruptions and four of their seven children had been placed in foster care three times. The placements occurred at times when the parents were unemployed, the family had lost their housing, and food and clothing for the children were inadequate. Other reasons which contributed to the three placements were:

1) the children rarely attended school (the older girls - age 11 and 12 - were of average or above intelligence, but could not read);

2) lack of medical attention for the children's continuous rashes and infections;

3) marital discord which led to fights between Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap;

4) lack of organization in the home - the parents were unable to manage the children or the household;

5) Mrs. Dunlap's lack of confidence in herself as a mother and wife;

6) Mr. Dunlap's heavy drinking.

Each time the children were placed in foster care, Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap found employment and a place to live, and the children were returned to them. Shortly after each time that the family was reunified, the problems listed above began to reoccur and eventually the family disrupted.

The present placement (the fourth) occurred six weeks ago when a relative of the Dunlaps informed the social service agency that the Dunlaps were being evicted from the motel in which they had been living and that they had no place to go with the children. When contacted by the agency worker Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap hesitantly, but voluntarily placed the children in foster care. Now, six weeks later a juvenile court hearing is being held to determine whether the children will be returned home or remain in foster care. The worker has discussed with the Dunlaps the possibility of termination of parental rights and placement of the four children in adoptive homes in order to avoid additional upheavals and disruptions for them. Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap are strongly opposed to this.

The Dunlaps tell the worker that they have made great strides in the past six weeks. Mr. Dunlap says that he knows a friend who can get him a job making $12,000 a year. Mrs. Dunlap says that she would like to have a homemaker to help her manage the house, write menus, cook, grocery shop, develop a budget, etc. Both Mr. and Mrs Dunlap express an interest in taking parenting classes. They recognize their past inability to control their children and believe that parenting classes would help. They also suggest marital counseling for themselves. Mr. Dunlap indicates that he has not been drinking for the past six weeks and that because of his prospective job and his desire to have the children returned, he will not drink again.

Points for discussion:

____ Should the worker confront Mr. and Mrs. Dunlap about the reality and feasibility of their suggestions?

____ How can the "bargains" that they propose he converted to a realistic, achievable contract? If this is not done and the Dunlaps fail again, what feelings might they experience? Anger? Depression?

Ms. Graham

Ms. Graham's two children (ages 8 and 10) came into foster care six years ago due to "child neglect". As a young, single parent Ms. Graham had been unable to handle her children, her job, and a social life for herself. She felt overwhelmed with the responsibility of two children; she lacked confidence in herself as a parent; she had problems locating and maintaining adequate employment and housing; and she was not able to provide sufficient food, clothing, or supervision for the children. Ms. Graham had not married the children's father After the birth of the second child, he left the family. He had been imprisoned for the past five years.

When the children were placed in foster care, Ms. Graham lost contact with them and the agency for about one year. She recontacted the children's social worker after the first year to discuss how she might "get the children back". During the next four years the Graham children had several different workers. Ms. Graham was unable to successfully complete a contract with the agency, in part due to the frequent worker change. However, on her own she completed high school and became a teacher's aide in an elementary school. Ms. Graham gave birth to a third child. She supported that child herself, and she visited her two children in foster care on a rather sporadic basis.

During the sixth year that the children were in care the new agency worker actively pursued returning the children to Ms. Graham. For about six months, Ms. Graham cooperated and met the terms of the contract; however, as the date for returning the children home drew near, Ms. Graham began to back off.

The foster parents had always resisted Ms. Graham's involvement and had more or less sabotaged previous efforts toward returning the children home. Ms. Graham quit calling the children for fear the foster parents would answer the phone. When the foster parents tried to change the time of her visits with the children, Ms. Graham told the worker to cancel the visits completely. When weekend visits were scheduled for the children, Ms. Graham asked to postpone those visits until she got a larger apartment. Ms. Graham began to feel that her youngest child would resent the return of the older two children. She was unable to work with the children around this. Although the children loved to see her and wanted to return home, she began to feel that she could not give them as much as the foster parents had and that it might be better for them to remain with the foster parents.

Points for Discussion:

___ Many students and workers might believe that because of her fears and hesitancy Ms. Graham did not really want her two older children to return home. The instructor should assist the students in recognizing the relationship between Ms. Graham's behavior and her feelings of "depression".

___ How can the worker help Ms. Graham recognize her feelings, validate these feelings as natural, and work through them to the phase of acceptance?

Mrs. George:

Mr. and Mrs. George had been divorced for five years. Their six children (3 girls-ages 9, 13, and 16 and 3 boys - ages 11, 15, and 17) lived with Mrs. George. Mr. George assumed no financial responsibility and rarely visited the family. Mrs. George worked as a secretary. None of the George children worked.

The family experienced several problems which contributed to the foster care placement of the three girls. Because of Mrs. George's work schedule, she was out of the house from 7:45 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The older boys did not attend school and had friends over for parties during the day. There was a great deal of sibling rivalry. The girls tried to run the household the way their mother would. The boys resented this. There was anger directed toward the mother from all of the children. They resented the lack of financial support from their father and criticized her inability to confront him. Mrs. George lived by a very strict religious code and wanted her children to do the same. They resisted the restraints this placed on their activities and their manner of dress. The youngest daughter, although nine years old, was babied by her mother and was very immature and demanding.

The event that actually precipitated placement of the three girls occurred when the 16 year old daughter accused her 17 year old brother of sexually molesting her and her 13 year old sister.

Mrs. George opposed the placement of the three girls but the court believed the sexual assaults had occurred and that Mrs. George could not provide enough supervision to assure that it would not occur again.

Initially, Mrs. George denied that it had ever happened, she expressed anger at her oldest daughter and blamed her for the placement. All three girls were placed in the same foster home and their initial adjustment was good. They preferred foster home placement to living with their mother. Mrs. George tried to talk the girls into coming back home. She told the agency worker that she would quit her job to stay home with them. Shortly after the girls placement, her two sons who were not attending school began to get into trouble. In a fit of temper one of her sons beat up an old man. Mrs George became overwhelmed and depressed. She felt unable to cope with her three sons. She began to feel that the girls would never return. She and her oldest daughter were barely speaking to one another.

Mrs. George and her children also had many strengths not yet mentioned in this description. Mrs. George was very bright, work oriented, and successful in her job. All six children were very attractive, they had no physical problems, and were all of average intelligence. Except for the continuing conflict between the oldest two children, the siblings were supportive of one another.

Extended family (aunts and uncles) were very concerned about the family and suggested that the children visit with them for short time periods to alleviate pressures in the home. Mrs. George did not want her family disrupted. She wanted to be a "good" parent.

As Mrs. George worked through her depression she began to see ways of improving the situation at home. The entire family began weekly family counseling. Mrs. George was able to get her oldest son enrolled in a vocational program. She went to court to seek support from her former husband and won. This helped tremendously with the financial pressures. After several months of family counseling, Mrs. George also accepted the fact that her oldest daughter did not wish to return home. She was able to accept this without her previous anger and resentment. The oldest daughter encouraged her younger siblings to return home, and they did. When the family was reunited, they continued to have conflicts and problems, but they were able to deal with them better. Mrs. George had recognized and accepted her responsibilities, but also her limits.

Points for Discussion:

___ Identify the actions of Mrs. George which demonstrate her progress through the various stages of the separation process. Discuss the feeling she might have had at each stage.

___ At what point does Mrs. George demonstrate her acceptance of the separation and begin to take positive steps toward reunification?

IV. Learning Exercises/Teaching Techniques

IV. Learning Exercises/Teaching Techniques

A. Personal Separation Experiences

One means of helping students experience the impact of separation is to divide them into groups and have each student share with the group a personal separation experience. What is significant in this exercise is that the students own experiences are usually much less traumatic than the experience of a child being removed from his family and taken to live with another family. However, to each student his own experience is important and significant. The professor might guide the students to compare their own feelings to those that a parent or child must feel when they lose each other.

B. Guided Fantasy

Using the guided fantasy technique, ask class members to imagine and record their feelings about being removed from their home, taking one possession with them, questions they would have about reasons for the removal, and survival strategies they would develop. Follow with group discussion about feelings experienced in a separation.[4]

C. In Class Separation Experience

While students are divided into small groups working on a project or exercise, the professor, without any explanation, instructs a student to move from one group to another. After a short interval, he moves another student. After four or five students have been moved and several minutes have been allowed for adjustment to the new group, the professor stops the group activity on the project to discuss the feelings of the "chosen students" who moved from one group to another.

Feelings that are often experienced include:

(1) Why me? What was I doing wrong?

(2) Disorientation - leaving one group while in the midst of a discussion and moving into an unfamiliar discussion

(3) Discomfort - in the new group. An inability to explain why he was there

(4) Anger - toward the professor for moving him

(5) Rejection - by the first and second groups

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[4] Loppnow, Donald and Sarah R. Taggart. Family and Children's Services Specialty: The Development OF An Elective Concentration In A BSW Program. Social Work Program, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1981, p. 49.

Behaviors that may be exhibited by the "chosen students" include:

(1) Withdrawal - in the new group. Student does not enter into the discussion

(2) Hostility

(3) Over Compensation - trying to justify his presence to the new group

Feelings of the groups, both the ones from whom a person was taken and the ones that had a new person thrust upon them, should be explored.

Feelings expressed by the groups may include:

(1) Confusion

(2) Sadness

(3) Bitterness

(4) What's wrong with our group? Why was the student removed?

(5) Loss

The professor should explain his motives and guide the discussion into the feelings that children may have when placed in a new environment, that parents experience when a child is taken from them, and that foster families have when a new child comes to live with them or leaves them.

D. Feelings of Parents With Children In Foster Care

The attached checklist[5] identifies "feelings" that some parents have expressed at the time of the placement of their child in foster care. It can be used in this exercise which is designed for students who are currently involved with parent/s and their child who is or will be placed away from home. The classroom instructor or field instructor might conduct the exercise as follows:

1. Have the students select 1 or 2 parents with whom they are working on issues involving their child's placement away from home. Have the students administer the attached checklist form to each parent.

2. During the administration of this form, each student should focus on how he/she can assist the parent with recognizing his feelings, validating those feelings, prioritizing the feelings to be dealt with, and coping with those thoughts or feelings.

3. The students might report back (verbally or in writing) to class or field work setting their experiences in terms of:
    a) the utility of using this form for the student and parents in sorting out issues
    b) analyzing which feelings, if any, seem to be more pronounced than others among the parents
    c) analyzing which feelings among these parents seem to be related to the various phases of separation (i.e., denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance)
    d) how the students were able to assist the parent/s in coping with separation.

Note: If the students are not working with parents who have children in placement, the instructor might still use the checklist as a basis for discussion to stimulate students to recognize and deal with the kinds of feelings parents experience when their children are placed out of their home.

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[5] Horejsi, Charles R. et al. Parents With Children In Foster Care: A Guide To Social Work Practice. Department of Social Work, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana. 1980, Appendix D, p. 229-230.

A Checklist For Parents With Children In Foster Care[*]

Below is a list of thoughts and feelings expressed by parents. Some are very strong feelings. You may or may not feel like other parents in a similar situation. Place a check (✓) by those that come close to describing your feelings over the past five (5) days. Check all that apply.

______I feel stunned and numb.
______I feel like this whole thing is a bad dream, I cannot believe this is really happening.
______I feel preoccupied with the thoughts of my child and the separation; I cannot seem to think of anything else.
______I feel shaky and nervous--as if a friend had suddenly died.
______I feel overwhelmed; I can't think clearly or do what I know I should do.
______I feel everyone blames me for what happened, even though it was not all my fault.
______I feel I was singled out unfairly and that I am being accused of being a "bad" parent.
______I feel like I have been railroaded and treated unfairly by the agency and the court.
______I feel like I want to avoid contact with my child.
______I feel like I cannot face my own child.
______I am afraid of what others think of me.
______I feel resentment toward everyone.
______I fear what I tell my social worker will be used against me.
______I feel afraid that I will never get my child back.
______I feel confused over why my child was placed in foster care.
______I feel sort of relieved now that my child is in foster care.
______I fear that my other children will be placed in foster care.
______I feel depressed and sad.
______I feel alone and isolated; I feel everyone has abandoned me.
______I feel cut off from family and friends.
______I feel like running away and never coming back.
______I feel God is punishing me.
______I feel placement was necessary even though it was painful.
______Given time and help, I feel I can put things back together again.
______I feel I am pretty clear now about what I need to do in order to deal with this situation.
______I feel much better than I did when my child first went into foster care.
______I feel things will work out for the best.
______I have mixed feelings about foster care--sometimes I want my child back and sometimes I think he/she is better off if we are not together.

Please describe here any "feelings" you have that do not appear on the above list.

____

____

____

[*] Horejsi, Charles R. et al. Parents With Children In Foster Care: A Guide To Social Work Practice. Department of Social Work, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana. 1980, Appendix D, p. 230.

V. Audiovisual Resources

V. Audiovisuals

The following audiovisuals are relevant to the topic of attachment and separation.

A. Young Child In Brief Separation

James and Joyce Robertson, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, available through New York University Film University, 26 Washington Place, New York, New York 10003, 1967-73. 16mm film. Significant content area includes affect of loss and separation on young children.

B. Fostering Breakthrough (videotape)

Part I

Ms. Pam Pope, parent whos children were place in foster care, describes the losses she experienced, her relationship with the foster parents, and the latter's role in helping her learn new parenting skills. She is interviewed by Jean McFadden of the Eastern Michigan University social work faculty.

Part II

A panel discussion with Ms. Pope and Eastern Michigan University social work faculty members about the implications for delivery of services to families and children.

C. Marlene's Story (videotape)

Part I

An interview by Emily Jean McFadden with a former foster child about her belief that she would be reunited with her biological mother. Marlene describes the distortions in time which occurred during separation, the implications of contact with her mother, and the experience of coping with physical abuse in the foster home.

Part II

In a panel discussion with social work faculty the topic is intervention strategies which enhance the ties of the biological family with the child in foster care.

For information about the renatl ($15) or purchase ($45) of videotapes B and C, contact Social Work Program, King Hall, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197 - (313) 487-0393. (videotape B can be obtained from Region III Child Welfare Training Center) free on loan.

D. Can't You Understand What I am Trying to Say?

This 16mm color film, 22 minutes in length, depicts a seventeen year old girl interacting with her foster family and social worker. The young woman's confusion about her identity and fear of attachment are thoroughly explored. Produced by the Child Welfare League of America. Available free on loan from the Region III Adoption Resource Center, 1218 Chestnut Street, Suite 204, Philadelphia, PA 19107 - (215) 925-0200.

E. The Scrapbook Experience

With the help of social worker, Gilbert, a foster child, develops a sense of identity as he works on his autobiographical scrapbook. In constructing the book, Gilbert has the opportunity to clarify and express his feelings about the past, and explore his fears about the future. He also reveals how he feels about himself and the significant people in his life as his social worker begins to prepare him for a move into an adoptive home. This 16mm film was produced by Image Associates and is available from the Region III Adoption Resource Center. (Free loan)

F. Johnny Boy

One of the first films developed on foster care, it depicts in a very vivid way, the plight of a foster child having to be moved out of one home and into another. It was especially effective in recruitment efforts for finding adoptive homes for 'hard to place' children at the Florida Division of Family Services. In a Chicago International Film Festival it won the Silver Hugo Award in the Community Relations Division. It is a 16mm color film 10 minutes in length. Available for loan from Office of Communications, Virginia Department of Welfare, Attention: Audio-Visual Library, 8007 Discovery Drive, Richmond, Virginia 23288 (phone: 804-281-9204).

G. Natural Parent Perspective on Foster Care

A young woman with an alcoholic problem discusses the voluntary placement of her child. She explains what was helpful to her in her relationship with the social worker and emphasizes how guilt feelings impeded her progress in self-esteem and caring for her child. This actual client is very articulate and offers helpful suggestions for social workers working with a natural parent around separation and guilt issues. (3/4 inch video cassette, 1 hour in length produced by the University of Montana, Department of Social Work, Missoula, Montana 59812). Available (free loan) from Region III Child Welfare Training Center.

H. Don't Condemn Me Till You Know Me

This 22 minute black and white 16mm film presents interviews with natural parents who placed their children in foster homes and eventually were able to have them return to their home. The parents are quite candid and discuss some of the difficulties and guilt feelings associated with placing and separating from their children. This is very helpful for training or educating students/new workers about the feelings and perspectives of birth parents. Produced by the child welfare League of America and available (free loan) from Region III Child Abuse/Neglect Center and Region III Adoption Resource Center.

I. Dr. Vera Fahlberg is developing videotapes to accompany Chapter V and Chapter VI of the Project CRAFT material noted previously. It is expected that these videotapes will be available through the Child Welfare Training Center at a later date.

VI. Resource Persons/Organizations

VI. Resource Persons/Organizations

National, regional, and local resource persons and organizations that can provide information or serve as guest speakers for class sessions exist throughout the country. Listed below are just a few such persons and organizations that can be contacted for information about separation and attachment.

A. National Resources

For information about working with birthparents of children in placement:

1. Dr. Charles Horejsi
Department of Social Work
University of Montana
Missoula, Montana 59812
(406) 243-6550

2. Dr. Anthony Maluccio
School of Social Work
University of Connecticut
Greater Hartford Campus
West Hartford, Connecticut 06117

3. Concerned United Birth Parents
National Office
P.O. Box 573
Milford, Massachuetts 01757

For information about separation and attachment:

1. Dr. Vera Fahlberg, Medical Director
Forest Heights Lodge
Evergreen, Colorado
(303) 674-6681

2. Project CRAFT
School of Social Work
University of Michigan
1015 E. Huron Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
Contact Person: Ellen Saalberg
(313) 763-4260

3. Julie Horn or Vicki Johnson
Michigan Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 30037
Lansing, Michigan 48909

(copies of the two Fahlberg workbooks - Attachment and Separation and Helping Children When They Must Move can be obtained from address above Cost 60c per copy.)

B. Regional Resources

For information about various aspects of child welfare, including attachment and separation, contact the following:

1. Region III Child Welfare Training Center
Virginia Commonwealth University
School of Social Work
1001 West Franklin Street
Richmond, Virginia 23284
(804) 257-6231

2. Region III CA/N Resource Center
Institute for Urban Affairs
Howard University
2900 Van Ness Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20059
(202) 686-6770

3. Region III Adoption Resource Center
1218 Chestnut STreet, Suite 204
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 925-0200

C. Local Resources

Potential guest speakers for individual class sessions are those local persons who have been personally or professionally involved in situations of attachment and separation.

The following are a few examples of such persons/organizations:

1. Adoptive Parent groups
2. Foster Parent groups
3. Parents Anonymous groups
4. Self Help Groups of Birth Parents (these groups are developing more and more in local communities)
5. Local public or private child welfare agency social workers

To obtain information about local parent groups in items 1 - 3, the instructor might contact the national and regional organizations listed below:

1. A. Laurie Flynn, Executive Director
North American Council On Adoptable Children
1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Suite 229
Washington, D.C. 20036

B. Marlene Piasecki, Director
Region III Adoption Recource Center
1218 Chestnut Street, Suite 204
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 925-0200

2. Jacob Sprouse, Executive Director
National Foster Parent Association
P.O. Box 257
King George, VA 22485

3. Parents Anonymous
National Office
2810 Artesia Boulevard
Redondo Beach, California 90278

VII. Readings

The readings listed below deal with various aspects of separation and attachment. The list includes pertinent readings but is not intended to be an exhaustive bibliography. The readings are divided into five categories. The suggested core courses compose four of the five categories. Although we have suggested the course in which the readings seem to be most appropriate, all of the readings deal with issues related to family separation, and they can be used interchangeably among core courses. The best use of each reading identified is left to the discretion of the individual instructor.

Note: Readings that are asterisked (*) and annotated are taken from bibliographical sections of Training In The Adoption Of Special Needs Children, Project CRAFT and University of Michigan, 1980.

A. General Readings

Adler, Jack, "Separation - A Crucial Issue In Foster Care," Journal of Jewish Communal Service, 46:4 (Summer 1970): 305-313.

Colon, Fernando, "In Search of One's Past: An Identity Trip," Family Process, 12:4 (December, 1973): 429-438.

Fahlberg, Vera, "Attachment and Separation" (Chapter V) and "Helping Children When They Must Move," (Chapter VI), Training In The Adoption Of Children With Special Needs. Project CRAFT and the University of Michigan School of Social Work, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1980.

Fraiberg, Selma, The Magic Years, Scribner and Sons, New York, 1959.

Horejsi, Charles R.; Ann Bertsche: and Frank Clark, Parents With Children In Foster Care: A Guide To Social Work Practice, Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1980, Chapter 1.

Jenkins, Shirley, "Separation Experiences of Parents Whose Children Are in Foster Care," Child Welfare, 48:6 (June, 1969): 334-341.

Jesskerm, H.W., et al., "Separation Reactions In Young, Mildly Retarded Children," Children, 16, January-February, 1967, 2-7.

Littner, Ner, Some Traumatic Effects of Separation and Placement, New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1956.

Mandelbaum, A., "Parent-Child Separation: Its Significance To Parents," Social Work, October, 1962.

Rutter, Barbara, The Parents' Guide To Foster Family Care, New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1978.

"Separation of Children From Their Families," Chapter I of Permanent Planning Handbook, a publication developed by the Virginia Department of Welfare, Division of Social Services, Richmond, Virginia under a grant (90-C-993) from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

"Separation and Placement," CES 25, *Comprehensive Emergency Services, Training Guide*, 2nd ed., National Center For Comprehensive Emergency Services To Children, Nashville, Tennessee.

Sinanoglu, P. and A. Maluccio, (Eds.), *Parents of Children In Placement*: *Perspectives and Programs* (forthcoming), New York: Child Welfare League of America.

B. *Readings Relevant To Human Behavior In The Social Environment*

Ainsworth, M.D., and M. Boston, "Psychodiagnostic Assessments of a Child After Prolonged Separation In Early Childhood," *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 25:169-201, 1952.

Bowlby, J., "Attachment and Loss," Vol. 1, *Attachment*, New York: Basic Books, 1970.

Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, Norton, 1963.

*Fraiberg, Selma, *Every Child's Birthright: In Defense of Mothering*, New York; Basic Books, 1977.

Selma Fraiberg outlines what she believes is the birthright of infants - what they deserve in motherly care and love. She discusses the way that human attachment is formed and what it means to individual development as well as the disease of non-attachment. She argues that current thinking and public policy are jeopardizing children's access to their birthright.

Jenkins, Shirley, and Elaine Norman, *Filial Deprivation and Foster Care*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.

Jenkins, Shirley, "The Tie That Bonds," in Maluccio, A. and P.A. Sinanoglu, *The Challenge of Partnership: Working With Parents of Children In Foster Care*, Child Welfare League of America, 1981.

Kennell, J., D. Voos, and M. Klaus, "Parent-Infant Bonding," in Helfer, R., and C.H. Kempe (Eds.), *Child Abuse and Neglect*, Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1976.

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This book of eleven original, prize winning papers offers background, philosophy, and a spectrum of approaches for incorporating work with natural parents. These papers offer a fresh look at the whole placement process from separation, to the use of foster parents as aides to parents. Excellent classroom text for foster care issues, particularly the concept of permanent planning.

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E. Readings Relevant To Social Work Research

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VIII. Guidelines for Incorporating "Separation and Attachment" in Core Courses

VIII. Guidelines For Incorporating "Separation and Attachment" In Core Courses

A. Human Behavior and The Social Environment

Attachment and separation is a process that occurs in normal human growth and development. Understanding the way attachment normally develops between parents and children, how separations are handled as children mature, and how new attachments are formed are important issues in the study of human behavior. Equally as important is an understanding of what happens to a child or an adult who does not attach himself, who experiences too many separations, and who does not reattach. These issues can be taught in several ways. An excellent method of conveying this information to students is to focus on how families and children in the child welfare system cope and adapt to the attachment and separation process.

Issues To Be Addressed

- Development of attachments between parents and children - what normally occurs
- Assessing attachments between birth parents, foster parents, or adoptive parents and their children
- Effects of lack of attachment
- Reactions of child to separation - when moving to foster home - effects of several moves on child
- Filial deprivation - emotional reactions and behavior of parents separated from their children
- Promoting attachment - when a child returns home, moves to a foster home or to an adoptive home

B. Social Work Practice (Methods)

Social work practice courses include, but also move beyond, the development of knowledge about social work issues. In practice courses, students develop skills in intervention and the provision of services. A social work practice course might address the impact of the attachment and separation process on parents and children, but it also goes further, into the implications for social work practice. Skills in interviewing, assessment, developing case plans, contracting, etc. can be taught in relation to working with parents and children around attachment and separation.

Issues To Be Addressed

- How to interview a child who has been through many separations
- How to plan for placement of a child in order to ease the pain of separation
- Identifying the roles of the worker, birth parents, foster parents, and child in making moves easier
- Use of a Life Book in work with children in placement
- Use of parent support groups
- How to encourage attachments
- How to interview natural parents experiencing separation

C. Social Work Policy

The process of attachment and separation experienced by parents and children has tremendous implications for the developmentof agency and governmental policy. An analysis of legislation, policies, and social programs which impact families would not be complete without a thorough understanding of the impact of separation on families. Social programs from prevention to protection to placement must take into consideration how and why family disruption/separation occurs and how program policies encourage or discourage separation.

Issues To Be Addressed

- State intervention in family life - when, why, impact on family
- Toward a family policy - is it feasible - what have other countries done
- Programs/policies that prevent separation
- Placement policies - preplacement visiting - use of natural parents, foster parents and adoptive parents to help children adjust to placements
- Policies about parental visiting of children in placement
- Foster parents as potential adoptive parents
- Planning programs for children of divorce
- Impact of Title IV-B and 96-272 on the separation of families and children

D. Social Work Research

Depending on the focus of a particular social work research course, research related to families and children services can provide students with an overview of research literature as it relates to separation of families and children including an analysis of the problem formulation, research design and implications for practice and improved services, and designation of areas that need further investigation and research. Some of the topics related to separation and attachment that could be addressed in a review of research literature and in further research studies are listed below:

- How do the number of placements experienced by a child effect his ability to attach and experience future successful placements and relationships
- What are the feelings experienced by children and natural parents at the time of placement - implications of these findings on worker/parent/child relationships and communication
- Impact of parental visiting on a child's adjustment to separation and placement
- Impact of separation on parent and child behavior